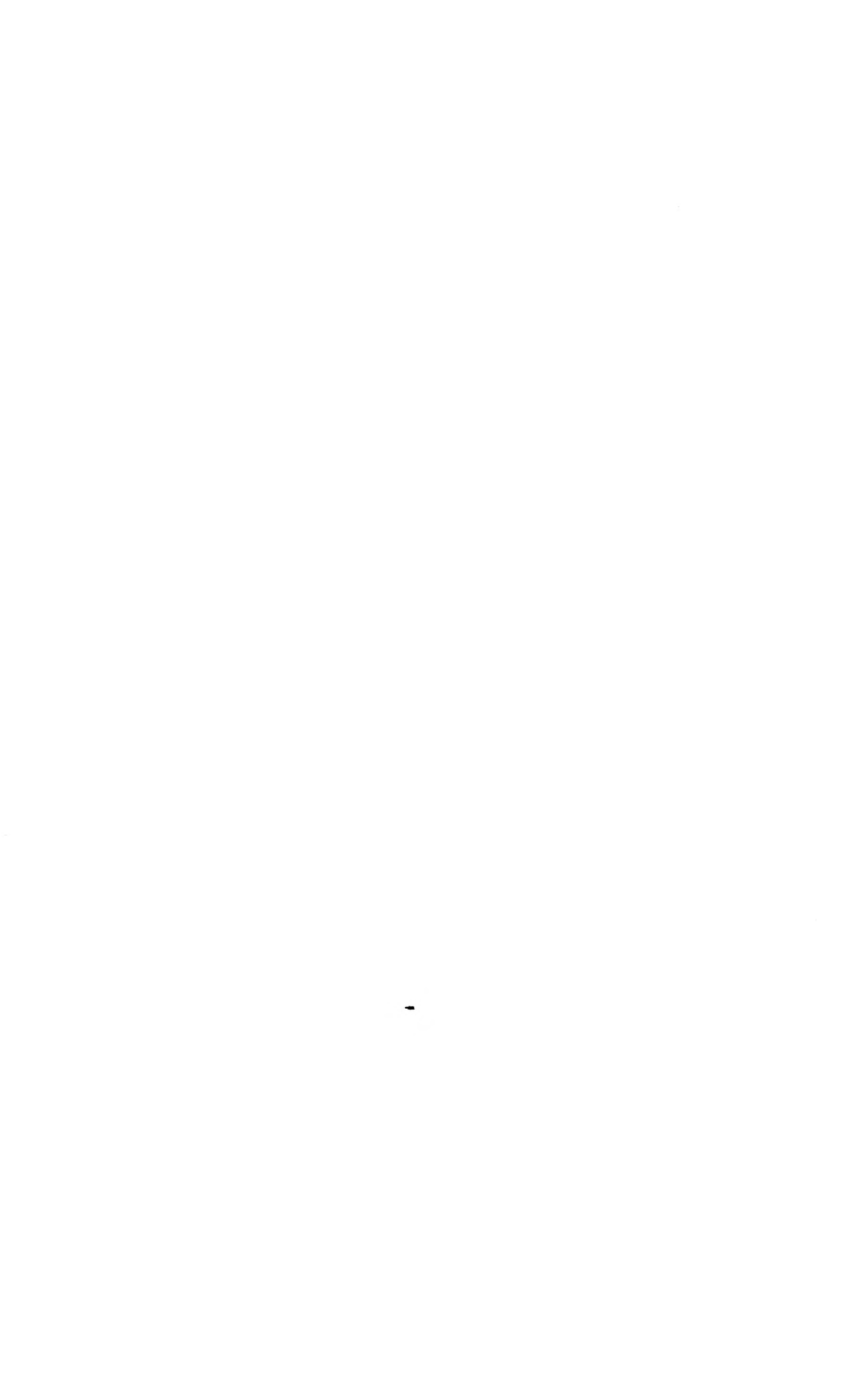


# FATE IN ARCADIA

E. J. ELLIS











FATE IN ARCADIA









See page 93

FATE

IN

ARCADIA

AND OTHER

POEMS

BY

JOHN

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TO  
THE MEMORY OF  
JOHN KEATS



## PREFACE

*Here kneels my word, that may not say  
Even to the inward ear of night  
More than the laughter of the day  
Or the soft weeping of twilight.*

*No waking hours, no sleep shall find  
The world's continual dream revealed.  
The Living Word is silent mind,  
And every book is closed and sealed.*

*Our Mother Earth for daily things  
Has given the daily mother-tongue ;  
But the mute wonder that she brings,  
All lips have kissed; no voice has sung.*

*And even now the usual word  
Spread like an empty couch and cold  
Measures the sound our father's heard,  
But holds no more the hint untold.*

*For He is risen whom we seek :  
The linen clothes without the form  
Are folded, lest too clear they speak  
The Divine Body, buried warm.*

*Then every song is free from blame,  
Though silence veil her inmost part  
Like the dark centre of the flame,  
Or the hot patience of the heart.*



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FATE IN ARCADIA.

SCENE I.—NEAR A WOOD. DAWN.

*An old Woodman is at work. Enter a Knight.*

*Knight.* I PRAY thee, Father Woodman, answer me,  
Are these dark woods the belt of Arcady  
Where lovers pipe away the tender air?

*Woodman.* They are. But men here labour as elsewhere  
And maids here suffer.

*Knight.* Are there maids here yet?

*Woodman.* There's one. The rest I bid my heart forget.  
Less love is here since first I went a-Maying.  
The Spring grows hard, and Winter breeds a  
saying  
That burns up hope as torches burn a moth:—  
'The world is old, and easily made wrath.'

*Knight.* A wintry word. I have not sung to-day.  
The sun is not yet risen on the hay,  
The summer flies are sleeping on the trees  
Trying not to dream of autumn and disease ;  
I'll sing a song of your ill-tempered saying,  
And fright the world where no one goes a-Maying.

(*Sings.*)

The spring is cold,  
The world is old,  
The summer shines and shines in vain.  
Cupid, crying  
Ceases trying,  
Who believe his words again ?

Who believe him ?  
Who receive him ?  
He 's a feeble stingless moth.  
June is cold,  
The world is old,  
Slow to love and quick to wrath.

*Woodman.* Your song is only anger without tears,











And dry and light and Winter-like appears.  
I like a love-song better. Lend me now  
That lute awhile. Though I am old I vow  
I know a younger-hearted tune than yours.

*Knight.* Give me Arcadian melody that pours  
Like Circe's wine, or like Medea's draught,  
And make me one of you when it is quaff'd.

*Woodman sings.*

When old Time from Summer flying,  
Turned once more his weary head,  
He grew young with song and sighing,  
While she bound his wings half-spread.  
Every year they laugh together ;  
Every year he feels the tether ;  
Every year she, seeming dying,  
Smiles asleep on her white bed.

*Knight.* You are a Woodman? What must be the maids?  
Have they white arms and bashful hair in braids,  
And lips that seem to dream the use they know  
not,

And feet that pause in pretty fear, but go not,  
And wisdom their hearts' quiet to defend  
Till Fate the Master comes, and Love, the Friend?

*Woodman.* She may have many joys unknown to me,  
Maids are not shameless even in Arcady.

*Knight.* Old Woodman, thou art young.

*Woodman.* We all are, here.

That is the one Arcadian harm to fear ;  
Pass not within this wood,—the tale is told,—  
Lest thou be one of us, and grow not old.

*Knight.* Old age's hour is not of men deferred.

*Woodman.* Love fifty years, and then repeat that word.

No, no, poor Knight, I am not wrath with thee,  
I'll save thee even yet from Arcady.

*Knight.* Thou art a merciful woodman, by the rood.

*Woodman.* Thou wilt be an Arcadian. Pass the wood.

## SCENE II.

*Enter a Maid.*

*Maid.* Each day-dawn while a single veil of night  
Was yet undrawn away, in long delight  
Thou knowest, with what a crystal quietude  
Have we together, old Arcadian wood,  
Waited on tiptoe the lost sun's return,  
Seeing the star-sparks fail, the cloud-flames burn,  
And circling mist of morning, on the heath,  
Lie as upon the grave of night a wreath.  
Now, now ! Oh, slowly, slowly ! This is he.  
The world and I, that were in prison, are free.

*Enter a Fairy, singing.*

*Fairy.* There 's a sunbeam on the harebell,  
Now I feel the rolling dew  
Dropping off her robe of blue ;

Ah, the harebell ! Hear the rare bell  
Swinging loud her ' Waken you ! '

' Waken you, the Day is chiding  
Poor old Night, that all men fear.  
Hide you, Night, the birds are here ! '  
Ah, the chiding ! See Night hiding !  
Dreams are gone and eyes appear.

*Maid.* The tale is old already. The broad sun  
Has driven away the dawn. The charm is done,  
And though the pale pink islands of the air  
Had only for his coming made them fair,  
And all the keen-topped mountains were awake,  
And all the dim woods trembling for his sake,  
Yet when his long and level spear at last  
Over the shoulder of the world is cast,  
He kills the wonder of his welcoming.  
How did the pretty herald harm the King ?

*Fairy.* Maiden, for all you have such velvet eyes  
And are so tall and straight, you are not wise.  
Go in and learn to read.







- Maid.* You little sprite !  
Are fairies wise that learn to read and write ?
- Fairy.* O poor dull-witted maid ! Come, sit you here,  
The field-mice fear me not. You need not fear.
- Maid.* No : and I fear not. Have you read, ‘ A maid  
Goes by the hungry lion unafraid ? ’
- Fairy.* Ah, pure one, I ’m a Fairy. I ’ve a glass ;  
Just lift me over that tall blade of grass  
And set me on this tree beside your face.  
Were I a man, you have such dainty grace,  
I ’d kneel to you like any swain that sings.
- Maid.* What, little wretch ! A Fairy and no wings ?
- Fairy.* I sold my wings for wisdom. Listen now,  
I ’ll tell you all the woodland laws allow.
- Maid.* But what about, wise foolish little Fay ?
- Fairy.* About yourself.
- Maid.* Oh no ! Some wintry day !  
A fairy story now, since you are here ;—  
See how the listening squirrels wander near,—  
Some tale of your own home would please me more.
- Fairy.* When you have learned my hard and useless lore,

And in my glass have seen what shall not ease you,  
Maid, you shall know if I would seek to please you.

*Maid.* Fairy, I fear you know.

*Fairy.* No fears avail,  
You have been wandering in twilight pale,  
In leaden bush, that knows not yet the day,  
Nor warmed your heart with any dreamland ray.  
Cold, without beauty, meagre, without grace,  
Saw you no semblance here of your own face?  
Oh, not as it is now. Three years are gone  
Since you were half a child and half a dawn.  
Look in my glass.

*Maid.* I see the face I know.  
This once was mine, strange Fairy, long ago.  
I sulked with silly dreams beside the shore  
Of childhood, empty-ey'd and foolish-pure.  
Have you no mercy? Let me not again  
Tell three years' patience that would turn to pain  
But for the dull surprise that bade them pass.

*Fairy.* Fear not. This charm is bounded by my glass;  
Look in again and see, and I will read.

Now comes a change. Here is the present need,  
For surely the pink sunrise needs the sun,  
Such are you now.

*Maid.*                               The charm is all outrun.  
I am wise and weary. You have done but ill  
To use your dreaming-glass and fairy skill  
To make me look upon myself and sigh.  
I needed nothing while the dawn went by,  
But now, I need.

*Fairy.*                               Speak, I will charm it here.

*Maid.* No, no! I do not mean I need: I fear.

*Fairy.* You and your pretty sister of the sky  
Both need the god of day: the dawn goes by,  
Being finished by his coming. If he stay,  
Doubt not he is a god, and fear, and pray.

*Maid.* Must I for ever fear?

*Fairy.*                               Love feeds on fear.

*Maid.* Love never comes to me.

*Fairy.*                               Love is now here,  
And, being come, may go; but come and gone  
Leaves not the sweet clear solitude of dawn,

But only death, fair mortal. Live your day,  
And keep through noon what dew of dawn you may.

*Maid.* Truth is the pearl for ever : dawn is none.

*Fairy.* Only beware : the red cloud draws the sun,  
But what the sun desires he ends. Farewell.

*(Exit Fairy.)*

*Maid.* Fairy, Truth trembles at the tale you tell.

*Enter Knight.*

*Knight.* This is the Maid. The Woodman told me truth,  
And I am pierced with dread eternal youth.

*(Advancing.)*

A trouble in Arcadia ? Tears ? A frown ?  
Here not the heavy lily may look down ;  
Here the white secret of the world is light,  
And harmless as the stars to stars at night  
Or hearts to hearts upon an April day.  
Yet, where is grief is service, and I pray,  
Tell me your sorrow, angry, pretty Maid.

*Maid.* A wingless wisdom makes my heart afraid.

*Knight.* Not, Wisdom too ? What Arcady is this ?

I'm in the world still. Maiden, a first kiss :

No. It is true Arcadia.

*Maid.*

Laugh not, sir.

Since first at dawn my heart began to stir,—

Oh, do not laugh ; your heart should leap to  
thank,

I loved you, knowing not.

*Knight.*

The maid is frank.

Yes : this should be Arcadia. Thanked be thou

For this, that thou hast told me, knowing now.

Why do you turn away ?

*Maid.*

Why have I told ?

The Fairy did not tell me I was bold.

No man can love me now. Oh, let me turn :

Be pitiful, and leave me here to burn,

Where I must dwell in fire, for this is shame,—

To bear through night a care without a name,

And through the day an anger at my heart

Against myself, all hiding and apart.

This is no sorrow that your heart may know.

You are rightly bold, yet pray you let me go.

*Knight.* By Heaven, the Woodman knew ! Yet by this  
hand

Man's wit has not the grace to understand,  
Even in Arcadia, so strange a thing  
As this they call a Maid. Stay ; let me sing.  
Sweet music shall not shame you, thanking you,  
I must avoid the truth and yet be true.  
I 'm frightened, as the snake-affrighted birds,  
At simple prose, the daily bread of words.

*Maid.* Farewell.

*Knight.* You shall not go.

*Maid.* I dare not stay.

Fairy ! I am already lost by day.







SCENE III.

*Enter the Knight, singing.*

*Knight.* When Fate went out masking  
And Cupid was young,  
There was joy for the asking,  
And love for who sung.  
The lizard lay basking,  
The noon bell was rung,  
When Fate went out masking,  
And Cupid was young.  
  
When Fate ceased adorning  
And showed her snake's head,  
The raven rose warning,  
And Cupid lay dead.  
From moonrise to morning  
A long prayer was said

For Fate's new adorning,  
And Love, lying dead.

No prayer, and no sorrow  
Moved Fate to repent,  
And once more to borrow  
The mask that life lent.  
But the sun on the morrow,  
Her shadow all bent,  
Made Fate haste to borrow  
The mask that youth lent.

Now her joy is our fearing,  
Beware ! oh, beware !  
Though her laugh be sweet hearing  
And golden her hair,  
Her old eyes are leering,  
She loves old Despair,  
And her joy is our fearing  
Beware ! oh, beware !

*Enter Woodman.*

*Woodman.* Have you come here to rail ?

*Knight.* I am too late.  
She must have passed but now. Can you be  
Fate?

Where is some pit wherein to have you hurled?

They say Fate is the woodman of the world.

*Woodman.* They say Fate is a woman.

*Knight.* They say well,  
For woman is all Heaven, and Earth, and Hell,  
Our hope, our harvest, and our long despair,  
Woodman, I cannot breathe Arcadian air.  
A man has leisure to be mad here. See,  
Deafen your ears, and cut away that tree,  
What wisdom has it, or have all the trees?  
I know that if my heart could be at ease  
The birds would build there. They can tell no  
more,  
They whisper the same message o'er and o'er  
Till truth becomes a folly. Go your way.  
For me, I've lost the thread of life to-day,  
I stand without a clue in the world's cave;  
But may not yet lie down, I've won no grave.

I should be moving, labouring like thee,  
 I am no ambassador like loitering sea  
 Bearing the whole world's melancholy ; no,  
 Nor yet her squire, who like the flowers that  
     grow

May carry her gay flag, nor find I ease  
 Like peaceful cattle who the hours appease  
 Chewing at eve the grass of morning's taste,  
 Till wondering Time forgets to be in haste.  
 All I admire, Woodman, I envy all.  
 Even the little streams that foam and brawl  
 Have more of use than I, that once had pride.  
 They bluster on with hearts more justified.  
 I wander aimless, where the wild-fowl whirr,  
 A bare-heeled knight, and in my heart the spur.

*Woodman.* What harm has darkened the new-risen sun ?

*Knight.* I met the Maid. My wonder, half begun,  
     I was almost ashamed and hid away  
     My secret awe with mocking words in play.

*Woodman.* That, sir, is not so ill. No blame is there.

*Knight.* No, it was ill. She was too grave, too fair.  
     You may, if you are pure at heart enough,

Laugh at the downy thistle's flying fluff;  
Laugh at the little wild roses that nod,  
Laugh at the baby daisies in the sod;  
But the great summer lily's noonday height  
Rebukes all hearts that kneel not to her white,  
Nor bring as tribute given in laughter's place,  
Seven silences as candles round her face.  
But worse than laughter, Woodman, was my  
failing.

*Woodman.* Sir Knight, though tears and words be un-  
availing,

Yet in Arcadia the best grief complains  
And no one here his woodland woe restrains  
But every ill to mild confession turns.

*Knight.* I did not speak of tears. Her sorrow burns.

*Woodman.* What have you done, sir. See, my axe is here.

*Knight.* You threaten me, poor Woodman? What is  
fear?

*Woodman.* I offer so much ease as he may win

Who in the hands of justice lays his sin.

*Knight.* Those groping hands are dull my fault to weigh,  
I could not saving in Arcadia say

That I, a Knight, felt wrong so delicate ;  
 But no heart can escape Arcadian fate,  
 Nor the completeness of Arcadian truth.  
 And I must needs betray the maiden's youth  
 In telling her soft secret. Pure and cold,  
 She loved, not knowing ; unknowing her love  
 she told.

*Woodman.* And then ?

*Knight.* And then at last I deemed she knew.  
 How should she tell it else ? Can false be true ?  
 Can heat be cold ? Yea, all things can be all ;  
 Fear can be kind, and kindness can appal.  
 I am wise now. All who do ill grow wise.  
 I thanked her, standing in the gold sunrise,  
 I thanked the maid.

*Woodman.* Why, that seems well to me.

*Knight.* Nay, I was found a fool ; what shouldst thou be ?  
 I should have loved her and not thanked : a smile  
 Hid in my thanks, and like a serpent vile  
 Made poison in her Paradise. Too late !  
 Fate ! Fate ! Ah ! even in Arcadia,—Fate !



SCENE IV.

*Enter the Maid and the Fairy.*

*Fairy.* No, pretty Maiden, hope not, nor despair.  
Despair and Hope both envy Patience fair  
And seek to steal her children. Fate and Time  
Are not more enemies. I know a rhyme  
I'll sing you now in low continual tone  
Like far-off waves trampling the shore alone.

*(Sings.)*

When quiet Patience moved her sombre cloak  
I saw the silent children round her knee,  
She kissed them, stooping low, and fondly spoke.  
‘These are all mine. Their love belongs to me,  
Nor the revengeful rod of envious Fate,  
Nor Time whose heavy chain is broken late,  
Can win them from my peace to fear or hate.

Yet still I fold them in my cloak for fear.

Two enemies I dare not let them see,'  
She stooped her shoulder over them, while near

Came one who, standing under every tree,  
Fastened a swaying rope and left it there,  
Looped up and empty, like a hollow pear,  
And he was her dumb husband, old Despair.

'And yet I do not hate him,' Patience said,  
'Though I the mother be of Peace and Rest,  
And he the only son is of the Dead,

Yet father of the children in my nest.  
But one I hate. Behold beside the sea  
Kissing her anchor. Kiss her not, for she  
The mad maid Hope laughs at my babes and me.'

*Maid.* No, little Fairy, go. Your music makes  
A tiny, soft intrusion. It awakes  
The restless grief that in my heart I keep  
And sing and sing to, but not sing to sleep.  
Oh, he will dry the blood out of my blushes!  
I long to sleep beneath the stream's cool rushes

Since though so near a thing is yesterday  
I cannot reach it. If you know a way  
To tread the path of Time one step reversed,  
Tell the poor world, whose heart I think will  
burst.

*Fairy.* Poor Maid, you have my pity.

*Maid.* Then meanwhile  
I pity your poor pity. Make me smile.  
Give me a ditty on Pity, Fairy dear.

*Fairy.* I will, but there is little smiling here.

(*Sings.*)

On pity Pity, she is sick  
Of all the world's endeavour.  
She is dying, haste you, quick!  
But none can help her ever.

Love, oh help her! Love replied,  
‘Let my blood cease pouring!’  
Then he showed his wounded side  
And silent heart's enduring.

Old mad Hate has wedded her,  
Justice bore she him for child.  
Hate is the world's wanderer  
Since the hour when Justice smiled.

Pity is alone again,  
Her child will not restore her.  
Her days are pain : her nights are pain,  
Fresh pain she sees before her.

When fire forgets its burning fierce,  
The bird forgets to fear us,  
The bee to sting, the rose to pierce,  
Then Pity's rest is near us.

*Maid.* Where did you learn the words ?

*Fairy.* Among mankind.

It was the day my wings fell. I was blind  
But I could see to fly. It's different now,  
Smile at my ditty if your heart allow.

*Maid.* Then while you sang my heart went many a mile,  
But if it please you, Fairy, I will smile.

You are too small to know how far apart  
In mortals are the lips and the sad heart.

*Fairy.* I know : a child's heart is my native land.  
There, many a dream I danced with hand in hand.

*Maid.* Yes, but a man's heart.

*Fairy.* I have been there too.  
In a man's heart, under a bending yew  
Beside the memory of a church, where loom  
Vast clouds like mourners, I beheld a tomb  
And buried my small mother there.

*Maid.* Alone ?

*Fairy.* No. He had buried his by the same stone.  
His mother was like you, in memory.  
She died but was not old, and mine like me  
Slept with her well enough, while for their sake  
All round them roll dark waters from a lake.

*Maid.* Of tears ?

*Fairy.* Why call them tears ? They are not shed.  
Call them the watchful waters of the dead  
That fill the moat around the unbroken keep  
That walls out weariness and walls in sleep.

*Maid.* Are there no living forms along the marge ?

*Fairy.* A world-full, pretty Maid. A heart is large.

*Maid.* What was your mother ?

*Fairy.* A childish dream of his.

The thing that might be, and the thing that is  
Are mortal both, and mourned when once they die.  
Seek not to look over the heart's wall high,  
Where, till the final brazen trumpet's din  
Sleep a strange mingled company within,  
For all the past in death alike shall seem ;  
The deepest love lies by the lightest dream.

*Maid.* Where is the man ?

*Fairy.* Wandering these woods this hour.  
He came for love, and found a scentless flower.

*Maid.* No more of him. Who lives in Fairyland ?

*Fairy.* Only the Moods,—a strange and wandering band.  
They come like travelling maskers for their day,  
And house them here, and grief or laughter play,  
Until their service being done,—on—on—  
They, leaving the heart's doors open, are gone.  
Now must I go, and leave you with the brood  
That evening's wings will gather in this wood,

Until the hour when my charms are wound  
Round the pale moon, and the dark earth around,  
In all the giddy deep of midnight shy.  
If you are sad you have companions high  
That kneel at the great gate of grief as you.  
Heard you not now the slender cries renew,  
Then sudden melody our tears to free?  
Come nearer. The bird hides by this dark tree  
Whose bosomed pain is never spent nor shed,  
Who worships with a song until the dread  
That opens the heart-gates when love comes by  
Makes the stem tremble, as with warning sigh  
When in the heavy hour of noontide warm  
Murmurs the silence-weary power of storm.  
So, on my wisdom, waken fears and cares.  
May be this night I too love unawares.  
Most dangerous memories my power invoked.  
Shall mortal's heart and fairy's heart be yoked?  
I'll seek my wings again: it's time for flight.  
Good-night.

*Maid.* Good friend, sweet little heart, good-night.

SCENE V.

*Enter Woodman.*

*Woodman.* How heavy grows this iron ! The falling day  
Weighs with its twilight always leaden grey,  
And now most leaden-heavy, my weak hands,  
They fail with weight of Time's long falling sands.  
And all companion memories draw apart  
Widening the ring of silence round my heart.  
I was alone before, but had not known  
How little my long labour was alone.  
That branch has moved, not by the wind. Who  
goes ?

*Enter Knight with bow and arrows.*

*Knight.* One that seeks not thy comfort for his woes.

*Woodman.* The Knight ! What ails you still that is not  
well ?



*Knight.* My folly, Woodman, most incurable.

*Woodman.* Bear you that bow and arrow for a mask ?

*Knight.* To chase the lazy deer that lie and bask.

*Woodman.* That bask at night ? You'll find no game to  
shoot

Unless you sing it near you with that lute.

Home, sir, and sleep. Your arrows will sail  
wide.

*Knight.* I would I felt them going through my side ;

Yet I am pleased if I but wound the air.

*Woodman.* The wind feels not a wound, nor any care.

*Knight.* That is my anger, Woodman. Here's a song

I made by chance, long, long ago, too long,

Before I knew what hope was, or dismay.

*Woodman.* Remember you so far ?

*Knight.* 'Twas yesterday.

(*Sings.*)

The thankless winds, the merry gales,

That fill alike the hungry sails

Of tall and heavy merchant ships,

Or the little boat that dips

And leaps like laughter while her freight  
Is no more than the mingled weight  
Of two light lovers, both so young ;  
She had not wept, nor he had flung  
Before that day his hope out free  
Under the sky to sail the sea,  
Nor found e'er he despairing grew  
How sweet to see hope turned to true,  
With tender care and pleasure grave  
By one slight Nereid whose wave  
Released her for a while on earth  
Where hid she in a maiden's birth ;—  
The thankless wind that all their sails  
Now fills, now flatters, and now fails,  
Never heard the prayer of man  
Since the rolling earth began  
To nestle in her robes of air.  
Yet has man his treasures rare  
To the wind that kept them never,  
Vainly with renewed endeavour,  
Reckless to his own undoing

Often given as for wooing,  
Lovers give that serve the god  
Who though blind will take no rod  
To stay his unregarded feet,  
But laughs and shoots his arrows fleet,  
Or weeps and gives his strength away  
Ever freely night and day.  
More do men as lightly fling  
To the winds that round them wing  
Like a bird-man flinging seed  
Into air his birds to feed.  
We have given love and rage,  
Tears and resolution sage,  
Prayers for Time to turn again,  
Tender clinging to old pain,  
Mad beliefs, and mad desires,  
The ruddy drops our heart requires  
Love of life and fear of death  
To the winds,—that feed our breath.  
Thus we give our gifts in vain :  
Breathing draws them in again.

There 's no giving while there 's living :  
All things pass and all remain.

(*Exit Knight.*)

*Woodman.* He feels this evil hour, it makes him mad,  
I 'm a poor woodman, only tired and sad.  
Could I make peace with the small fairies now ?  
If one came by I 'd pull my cap and bow,  
And ask her civilly of the magic weather,  
May be we 'd grow a sort of friends together.  
It 's long enough we live like enemies,  
All through those spiteful dryads of the trees  
That winter plagues and harms far more than I.  
Ah me ! I 'm half ashamed. I heard a sigh,  
Could it be mine ? I 'm glad that no one heard.

*Enter Fairy.*

*Fairy.* Blind Woodman, so you took me for a bird ?  
I caught you, lusty Woodman. Yes, you sighed.

*Woodman.* I 'm an Arcadian, Fairy, with no bride ;  
I have a right to sigh. Charm me that Maid.

*Fairy.* Too late, sir ; listen.

(*A distant cry is heard.*)

*Woodman.* Ah, my heart's afraid,  
That far faint sound was like a woman's cry  
In such sore pain, who feels it once must die.

*Fairy.* Nay, not so bitter, Woodman, yet a pain.  
The Maid you love is wounded but not slain,  
An arrow from the mad Knight has touched her  
arm.

*Woodman.* Quick, quick, good Fairy! Quick, some  
healing charm!

I'll give you all my trees to save her now.

*Fairy.* No need. I see her as my spells allow  
In this round glass. There is the Knight, her  
friend,

Purpose within him stands that shall not end.

*Woodman.* Is Purpose too a Fairy?

*Fairy.* That is sure,  
And far the most prevailing. From of yore  
She makes her house in bosoms of blind men  
Until old Fate shall cast her out again  
To die. Ah, Woodman, yes; we Fairies die,—  
I shall myself die some day, even I,  
Of being disbelieved in. You receive me

Because all good Arcadians believe me.

*Woodman.* The Maid, Fairy, the Maid !

*Fairy.* The Maid is well.

The purpose of his heart has woven a spell,  
And all the herbs are magic. She is cured,  
And shall for folly have the one reward,  
That were enough for Wisdom, once well prized,  
While poor old Wisdom wanders forth chastised.

*Woodman.* No, Fairy, joy is wisdom, to my mind.

Till the first sin Man knew no different kind.

*Fairy.* As it shall please you, Woodman. Now I go.

I've cheated Fate and killed her favourite woe,  
I weary of the sight of mortal joy.

*Woodman.* And I, kind Fairy, whom all hours annoy,

I loved her. I must leave this weary wood  
Where I was hopeless, yet of merrier mood.  
Men hopeless pine Hope's absence from the breast,  
Despair is a new fiend, and we're possessed.

*Fairy.* No, Woodman. I'll come with you through the  
cold,

I fear I love you.

*Woodman.* Is Despair consoled ?







SCENE VI.

*Knight.* I will not leave you.

*Maid.* See, my wound is healed.  
Drag no more herbs from the Arcadian field.  
I live and need them not, but they lie dead.

*Knight.* But now you bled.

*Maid.* But now you had not said,  
‘I will not leave you.’ You shall go from  
hence,  
And yet not leave me. I’ve no recompense  
For this to give you. Once you thanked me,  
Knight,  
I thank you now. Farewell.

- Knight.* You strike aright.  
You thank me for a wound. Ah, gentlest Maid,  
You are revenged, and all my fault is paid.
- Maid.* Why shines your face within the grey twilight  
Like a pale stone? Why do you leap upright  
As one made ready for defence or flight?
- Knight.* Because sharp mockery than iron more keen  
Thrust through regret, like a sure blade unseen  
Cuts the blind heart and kills what might have  
been.
- Maid.* Then love is dead?
- Knight.* I swear that love shall live.  
But by the justice that your own hands give,  
A sister of strong Love that near him dwelt,  
Love-like Repentance the hard wounding felt;  
Forth flies her soul upon the air to melt.
- Maid.* Yet you are angered?
- Knight.* No. That stroke I prize.  
We both stand now heart-equal, eyes to eyes.  
One mockery pays two blunders.
- Maid.* Then we part.

*Knight.* No ; for I go, and go not. In love's art  
You say that power resides. My heart is mine,  
And this I give you. By the will Divine  
Is mapped afar the pathway of my days,  
So may I always labour in His praise.  
My sword leads on. I follow in God's ways.

*Maid.* But still you are my wooer ?

*Knight.* For to-night.  
But think you if my spur were always bright  
That you would love me honourless, untrue  
With overmuch of truth, and dead with you  
From overmuch of life in sloth unblest  
While the wild eagles wander in their quest,  
And find upon the hills the wandering kyne,  
But not for prey one silent foe of mine ?

*Maid.* No. I have loved a Knight. I would not  
change.

Bind me the love alone. The Knight shall range.

*Knight.* Farewell, then, I am going. By my hand  
And by these flowers around us, by this land,  
And by the lapping sea and whispering dark,

And by the blue of day and her free lark,  
And by the swallow that returns again,  
I'll bind to you my love without a stain.

*Maid.* No, by no oath of these. Put here your  
hand,

This is no chilly flower of sea or land,  
No throbbing wing of any circling bird :  
Here is no tossing of the hoarse wave heard,  
Here leaps the living truth that you have found.  
This is my outward heart you feel rebound,  
Whose inward spring on love alone is wound.

*Knight.* Am I to swear by this ?

*Maid.* If you would swear.

Oh, see the tenderest gloaming in the air  
That folds us round for ever and apart  
As though we stood within the world's own heart.  
Shall we gaze here for ever ?

*Knight.* Evermore.

Oh, let me feel the darkened woods,—the shore,  
There is no sunrise like them. Let me lay  
Their treasured shadows for an inward day,

Within me, and their vaulted frame, for shrine  
Built round this hour, entombed, but always mine.  
While through my unsleeping soul the gold stars  
shine.

*Maid.* Love is a god and needs no sleep nor rest,  
Yet gaze, and bid your memory build a nest  
High in that sombre tree, the changeless past,  
Where Love's high-singing joys are safe at last.

*Knight.* My heart is safer than the past, and true :  
Its height is yours, its leafy rest for you.  
There you shall hide in most unshaken keeping ;  
Unseen within me, ever waking, sleeping,  
No anger, and no trembling, and no weeping.

*Maid.* No, none ; for Faith is ever clear of eye.

*Knight.* I feel the midnight passing through the sky.

*Maid.* We part then for the hour, but no farewell.

*Knight.* I, who fear nought, yet fear that word, that  
knell.

Oh, silently ! One look of love ! Again.

I cannot go yet.

*Maid.* I have strength for ten

If you have love for one. See, there, I heard,—  
That was the wing of an awakening bird.  
The morning shall not find us in this wood.  
Arcadian shades were given for solitude.  
Remember who from Eden forth were hurled.

*Knight.* The tale was true. Marriage is of the world,  
Dreams are the Garden, and the Serpent, Fate :  
And Love is still the Angel at the Gate.

*Maid.* Then leave me with no word, since no fare-  
well,—

And yet I had one last true vow to tell.

*Knight.* Give me the words, and I will vow the vow,  
And all the bending flowers shall hear me now.

*Maid.* Gaze now no more, my wooer for to-night,  
Gaze no more at the hard, offending flowers.  
Nor at the breathless moon, too silvery bright.  
These shall surround my solitary hours,  
These pale reminders of my one delight.  
But lean your breath upon my breath, like lips,  
And softly touch with lip to lip, like breath,  
And swear that loosely as the dew-drop slips

From off one night flower to the flower beneath,  
And silently as now those shadowy ships  
Ride on the midnight sea like dreams of death,  
And all resistlessly as that lost light,  
The falling star that none could hold, or save,  
So will you, far from me, to-morrow night,  
Grow faithless, and so make my hollow grave,  
Unless you love me when beyond my sight,  
Even as near and now :—this thing I crave.

*Knight.* Should I not love you even as now and near,  
Behold that were intrusion vile and rough  
To strike in my cold heart and turn to fear  
All the warm habitable haunts of love.  
For how should faithlessness become more dear,  
Where truth and memory were not dear enough ?  
Yet surely I will swear that if I may,  
I will become a lover most untrue.  
If I can meet upon my wandering way  
One heart that is more raised above the few,  
That rise above the many, than this day  
Your heart has risen, I 'll be false to you.

But since I may not find what does not live,  
And since I hold already my one friend,  
And since my heart's a casket, not a sieve,  
And since I shall not otherwise offend  
Save that I cannot alter love,—forgive !

*Maid.* That will I. Forth to fortune. Strike and roam,  
Be you my victory. I will be your home. •

THE END.







SHORTER POEMS







## SPRING.

WHEN quiet walks beneath the trees  
And Spring has found her there, intent  
On memory of last year's bees,  
That murmured round the June rose scent,  
Then vanishes pale Discontent,  
And little birds with star-like eyes  
On tree-tops peck the pink sunrise.

And poor mad Hope forgets her tears  
Only for this that grass is green,  
And where a daisy's face appears  
No more alone her light is seen.  
The children answer all they mean,  
Helping the flowers to plume the Spring  
Till the world is a young white bird on wing.

Then the dread Angel in the Sun,  
    Leaning above the tossing hair  
Of girls that leap and boys that run,  
    Murmurs aloud, ‘The World is fair!’  
    They laugh up answering through the air,—  
‘We are the only friends of Spring;  
Come, you may learn to dance and sing!’







## SUMMER.

Now Time is moving slowly ; heavy bees  
Are warm upon his wing, and peace begins,  
As though Forgiveness upon last year's sins  
Had breathed, and they were lost in the blue seas.

The farmer stands half idle and half praying,  
God has released his partner of the plough.  
Labour can do no more, and wondering now,  
Bids the heart ponder what the corn is saying.

Time trembles at the madness of the rose,  
And kneels down silent to the lily's power ;  
While, in the sudden hush, like one more flower  
The secrets of Eternity uncloze.

## AUTUMN.

Now riotous Autumn sung :—

‘ They say when Earth was young

There were two seasons only for man’s pleasure ;

Spring with white gifts, and I of purple treasure.’

Then, with a sudden frown,

She threw an apple down,

And said :—‘ I am remembrance of old error ;

Share the brief feast, and brood on the long terror.’











## WINTER.

TIME sought through veils of snow the Earth  
Where low she bent to await the sun,  
And found a little silent nun,  
Dreaming in prayer the Sacred Birth.

## THE MAIDENS TO THE MONK.

NAY, Father, is the world so iron-shored ?  
 Find we no hope of heaven but earth abhorred,  
     Our flying birds unfed, sweet rhyme unsung,  
     And light-foot joys we have loved and lived among  
 Cast out and trodden for the great reward ?

May all the laughing children of the day,  
 The sun-delighted hours return to play  
     To find us hidden in a deathly veil,  
     For hope of light in heaven to never fail,  
 Though now in life we hope their holier way ?

This way of hope has been the linnet's rest,  
 She dedicates thereto her sacred nest  
     In joys whereof we too would make assay,  
     And love, the cup half drunk, half spilled away,  
 We wait for who have come when fruits are pressed.

No, not the Master's loving is increased  
 By those, for love of him, who leave the feast  
     And with a scourge our happy hours assail.  
 Earth is not fair to these, their heaven is pale,  
 Their Christ no jovial Bridegroom of the East.

You say some sit with him at bitter meat,—  
 He gives them pain, and death of love to eat ;  
     The poor that labour and the blind that stray  
     Receive despair and heavy hours to weigh,  
 And those who cry for light and find deceit.

Why flower and song for us, and widened ways,  
 And savage hearts for these too sore to praise,—  
     Yea, do we sin indeed, being glad and young ?  
     Thy word a wind upon our sea has flung,  
 Thy choice is fettered trembling on our days.

THE YOUTH ANSWERED.

YOUTH.

DEAR Sage, ensconced in this wood,  
By whom the world is understood,  
Pray tell me now why this is true,  
That not the wise and good like you,  
But the poor wicked like us all  
Are loved of women since the fall.

SAGE.

Young Sir, when you would use your art  
To win with wiles a woman's arms,  
Do you begin to praise her heart,  
Or first, what once we called, her charms ?

YOUTH.

Poor Sage, you have forgot your Youth ;  
Her heart. Now give me truth for truth.

SAGE.

Right soon, O nimble Sir, I'll tell.  
But when to win her heart you seek,  
Do you confess your heart of Hell  
Or first of pretty virtue speak ?

YOUTH.

Vile idiot Sage ! How should we win  
Unless with saintship we begin ?

SAGE.

Impatient Sir, a poor surmise  
Only to bring my mind to yours !  
So then you mask as good and wise,  
Noble and brave to tune your lures,

Perhaps the faintest hint beside  
 That you were hard and scornful oft,  
 But, near so fair a one, your pride  
 Would worship now where once it scoffed ;  
 Or else that you were always good,  
 But here begin to doubt your powers,  
 Temptation now being understood  
 As never in your stormiest hours.

YOUTH.

You speak but truth, Old Sage, as yet,  
 But wander in the alphabet.

SAGE.

Then does the alphabet aspire  
 To answer all you asked of me,  
 You knaves that work for Cupid's hire  
 Well know the ancient subtilty,  
 For here your art of love is plain,







And used for every dame and maid :—  
 ‘ I ’m good : I love, but here ’s the pain ;  
 Love conquers ! you that undismayed  
 Love only good, oh ! hate not me  
 Whom you alone have taught to fail ! ’  
 The world holds no more flattery,—  
 Your tribute to the weak and frail,  
 Paid evermore by might to right,  
 And paid again by fire to ice.  
 Doubt not the heavy Snake was white  
 That tempted Eve from Paradise.

YOUTH.

True, Sage, to women sweet and fair,  
 A tribute paid by all who can !  
 But why was Eve at first made fair ?

SAGE.

That was God’s tribute unto Man.

## THE HERMIT ANSWERED.

His cave beside the dropping water waited,  
His two reeds fastened cross-wise leaned alone :  
No more he kissed the cross ; no more he hated  
The trembling flesh he scourged on weary bone :  
The hermit and his solitude were mated ;  
The worm and he were friends, and all was done.

The stern commandments were no more a wonder ;  
No danger more of doubt or of denial ;  
No yearning now to rend old vows asunder ;  
No warning in the shadow on the dial ;  
No bodily rebellion to keep under :  
Eternal quiet pardons the brief trial.

Better than he from whom the scales, in falling,  
Released poor clouded eyes and left new-sighted,

His eyes of clay obeyed the silent calling  
Of earth, and they to blindness were united.  
No more they feared to see sin's power appalling :  
The little dusty wrongs of dust were righted.

Out flew his soul into the noonday winging,  
Like a light bird, and seeing an angel mild,  
He said, ' How foolish was mad Satan bringing  
His store of petty poisons ! ' Then he smiled,—  
' How childish were my prayers, my scourge, my singing !  
And God said, ' See, I also am a child. '

## INNOCENCE.

WHEN first the Goat-foot Lover paid  
His court to maiden Innocence,  
And through the echoing valley made  
His reedy pipes their resonance,  
Her Guardian Angel all afraid  
Came pale with cold distrustfulness.

Long and loud the player playing  
To the maid with eyes intent  
Seemed a god, and she with praying  
Never bid her looks relent.  
How escaped they? There's no saying.—  
All the three were innocent.









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VENUS. p57



## V E N U S.

THEY say that Venus when her heart is bent  
 To voyage down the heavy, happy stream  
 That Pleasure, from her simple fountain sent  
 Amidst her garden, when the enchanted beam  
 That ripens the strange wine in many a dream  
 Lies loosely warm on eyes the dawn dew blesses,—  
 Queen Venus with the throat of pleasant cream,  
 And arms of silver joy and strange caresses,  
 Bids all men bleed in strife, like grapes the goat's foot  
 presses.

Whence came these wars around thee, laughing queen?  
 Whence came this vision? for no more art thou  
 Of all men worshipped, and by all dreams seen.

Yea, the sweet fable of thee, even now,  
 May half deceive whose wakefulness allow  
 Dim night's great riot hold the hair of day.  
 Nay, Venus, we will tell thee: hear and bow.  
 The voice of one whom thou dost fear alway  
 Shall now the charm of all thy moonlight powers betray.

This voice is of a goddess, who hath been  
 Long loved before the sea-foam found thee fair.  
 And she is naked as art thou, and seen  
 More lovely in her revelation rare.  
 The deep, dark well-waters her footsteps bear,  
 As waves bear thine above the fishes' fins,  
 And where thy honour finishes, lo! there  
 The praise of pretty goddess Truth begins.  
 Daily men deem they slay her: ever at last she wins.

'Tis she, thou child of sunny hours, has told  
 That thou art but a sweet far flattery,  
 With all thy winding arms, like lilies cold  
 Yet burning as thine eyes we faint to see,  
 For goddess Truth hath known our maids to be

Far fairer than all dreams. But Love hath ways  
 Truth knoweth not, and he invented thee,  
 A mask and sweet disguise for maidens' praise,  
 When scarce for burdened heart their tenderer lids they  
 raise.

He plays at being thy son—thy father he.  
 Love is far older than created things.  
 Then fear not, maidens, Love shall stand and see  
 Even your downcast eyes' cool coverings  
 Not over curiously ; nought he brings  
 Of burning to your faces, the more pure  
 Being his throne. For Love is king of kings,  
 And other honour than he gives, be sure  
 For marble may be fit, but for true maids, no more.

Nor shall men worship other chastity  
 Than this, that waits for Love, and will not stain  
 His ivory palace, that was built to see  
 His purple garment the closed portal gain,—  
 His dreaded bow, whence falls the arrowy rain

Strike on the bar ;—to hear his voice uprise  
 And claim his own ;—to feel with might and main  
 How he shall win the fort all power denies,  
 Guarded to all but him, like Earth's lost Paradise.

And if the King be found not entering in,  
 Nor at the heart's gate showing the sacred cord  
 Wherewith he binds his wings, whose flight were sin  
 If they should bear him thence, though Heaven's high  
 Lord  
 Smile on them circling thither, unabhorred,  
 For this their only service true should be,—  
 Yea, though he never come, if hope be stored,  
 Or hopeless, on the lips live Purity,  
 Then even in life or death is praised Love's Chastity.

Therefore, immortal Venus, turn and say  
 What art thou but a mask with all thy powers,  
 To this brief life our maidens give away ?  
 Ah ! sweeter than the southern scented flowers  
 That watch the world in June's enchanted hours

Those women's names who the mute vow have kept  
 Through pinching frost, or when hot thunder lowers,  
 Until their patience with kind death hath slept,  
 And the great fight is won, and the steep path o'er-  
 stepped.

What hast thou, Venus? Lo, thou dost confess,  
 Thou art immortal. Thou didst joy to-day,  
 And thou wilt joy to-morrow. Faithfulness  
 Is not for thee. Hast thou the price to pay?  
 Thou hast it not. The great pearl goes its way.  
 Sell all thy immortality and buy,  
 If thou wouldst be a woman and grow grey,  
 And yet be loved. Thou hast no tears to dry,  
 Still will we dream thee gladly, gilding the midnight sky.

Farewell, O fair Queen Venus, and farewell:  
 The happiest hour a true madman knows  
 Is when he first beside thy hand may dwell,  
 And yet the very lightest of his woes  
 Is when he bids a long farewell and goes,

And leaves thee to delight who comes anew.

Farewell for ever. Bright as mountain snows  
Under the morning sun, and clear as dew,  
Thy memory fades with singing, like the lark lost in blue.







## HER TOKEN.

A MANY-BANNERED, gay procession, proud,  
 Flowed like a stream full fleeted with the leaves  
 That Autumn from her painted scarf allowed  
 To float away from gilded forest eaves,—  
 A tumult startling earth that sleeps and grieves,

A laughing multitude, come forth to grace  
 A newly-moulded statue, fair, upright,  
 That bore on lifted throat a dreaming face,  
 All formed of gold. When harvest warms the night  
 Less wine-gold is the moon's awakening light.

This shape was Venus, on a high car drawn,  
 And near her side knelt Love with folded wing ;  
 His own face dreaming not, like opening dawn,

Promised the sound of arrows that should sing  
Like birds upon the sunbeams dawn shall bring.

For in his hand he held his bow all bent,  
And on the bow-string lay the slender dart,  
That, ever aimed, and never freed and sent,  
Pointed, it seemed, at each high laughing heart  
That thronged him without fear on every part.

So past the rounded hills, and mountains pale,  
Under the trees' blue shadow, by the sea,  
The golden car with heavy fringe's trail,  
Where the white horses had been loosened free,  
Was drawn by men to women's minstrelsy.

Troops of white girls with cymbals, harps, and lutes,  
And shells, and lyres, and rebecs, and the sound  
Of stringed things unnamed, like golden fruits  
Poured out in Eden garden on the ground,  
With their sweet plenty did the path surround.

And down their lines, and forward and behind,  
 Sweet music went, for all were newly fired  
 With the same singing thought in every mind,  
 So that no leader held the choir inspired,  
 But all served each with sound that never tired.

And ever and anon, the melody  
 Leaped into laughter of such lifting tune  
 That all the crowd were children suddenly,  
 And danced like ripples dancing with the moon,  
 On silver spaces of some warm lagoon.

And then, before to sadness fell the mirth,  
 Melodious woke the choir inspired again.  
 A hundred gods all leaping to the earth,  
 And pouring forth their share of joy to men,  
 Would make a less delight than there was then.

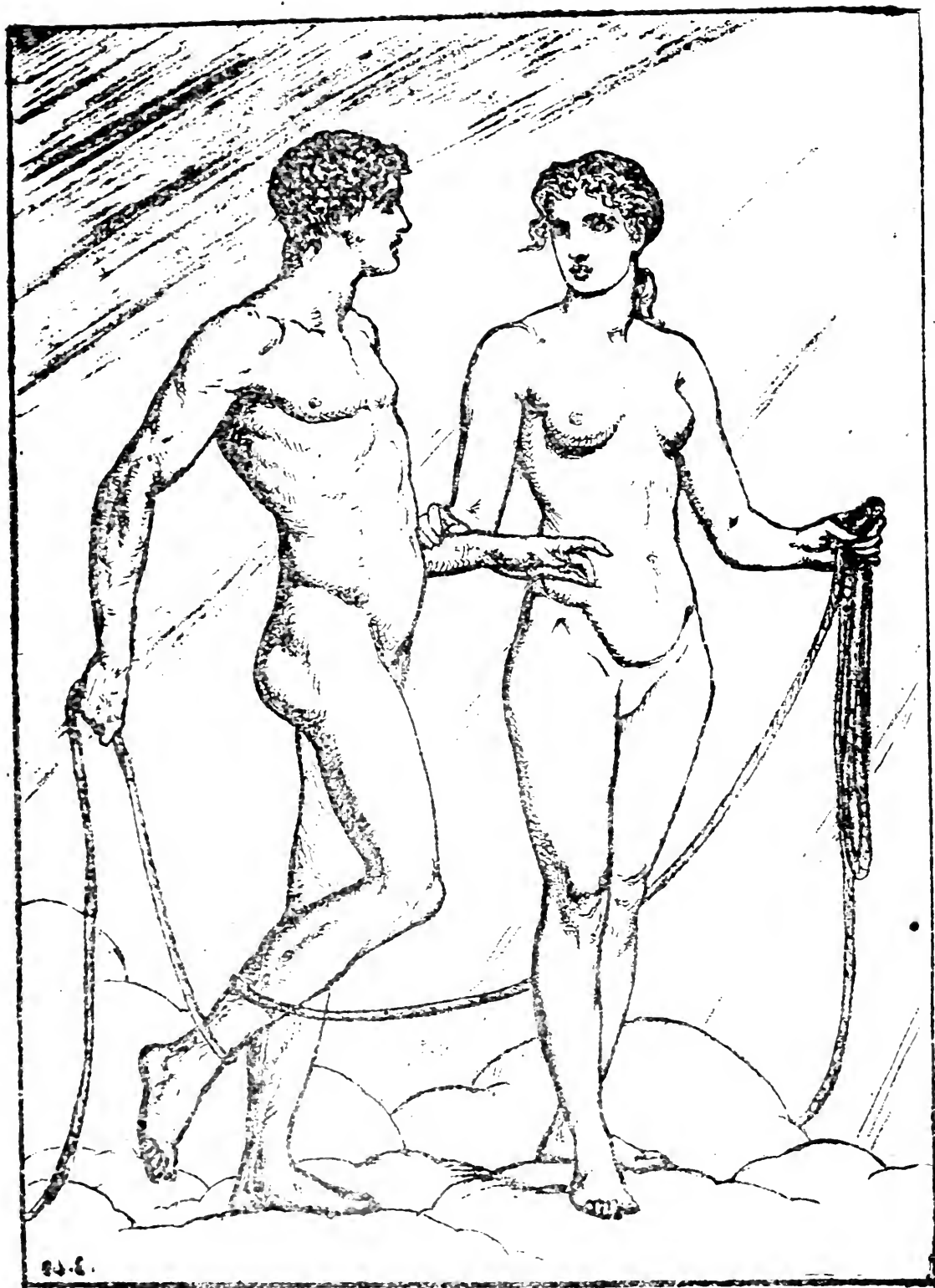
So Love and Venus went across the land,  
 By cliffs and woods, by town and stream and field,

From spring-time, till the Earth with open hand  
The wealth of all her fruitage yearned to yield :  
And ever as they went the music pealed.

And though they met with Age, and Pain, and Woe,  
And though they passed by Anger and Despair,  
Yet ever did the bright procession go,  
And ever rang the music in the air,  
And all the world was served, and rendered fair.

And ever,—so a Herald promised all,—  
Shall these go by for who may rise and see.  
Ah, Venus, though black Horror shall appal,  
And though blind Fate shall follow threateningly,  
Joy has been here, and is, and still shall be.





22.6.

→ HER GOOD DEED. 1767

## HER GOOD DEED.

‘ LITTLE leaves of Autumn’s giving  
     Hardly ceased their down spinning,  
 Buried Winter seeds their living  
     Hardly proved to Spring-time winning ;  
 When we saw you last, Young Seeker,  
     Youthful, frowning, dark, and close,  
 While old pious loves grew weaker  
     In your sullen heart morose,  
 While the home your childhood knew  
 Like a prison weighed on you.

‘ Now unwearied, though surrounded  
     By the silver hairs unaltered,  
 You with laugh and light unbounded  
     Kiss the care that has not faltered.

Liberty to you seems given

Like a gift for days to be,

Or a prize, where none have striven,

Or release where all are free :

Who unbound your bonds ? ' I cried.

' Venus only,' he replied.



## THRICE LOST.

FIRST his parents said they lost him :  
No one knew where to accost him  
    Though his loss had made no showing :  
    He was there, and yet no knowing  
    Where he was : he was but growing,  
Yet his parents said they lost him  
And the secret to accost him.

Then his friends found out they missed him :  
It was since a maid had kissed him,  
    And with no great outward seeming  
    He went through the world of dreaming,  
    And this loss had no redeeming.  
No one knew the maid had kissed him :  
Quite in vain they said they missed him.

Now the world of busy men  
Cannot find him once again,  
While he seeks in vain to nerve them  
To high duty, and to serve them ;  
He can make, nor break, nor curve them,  
For outgrowing busy men,  
Like a child he's lost again.

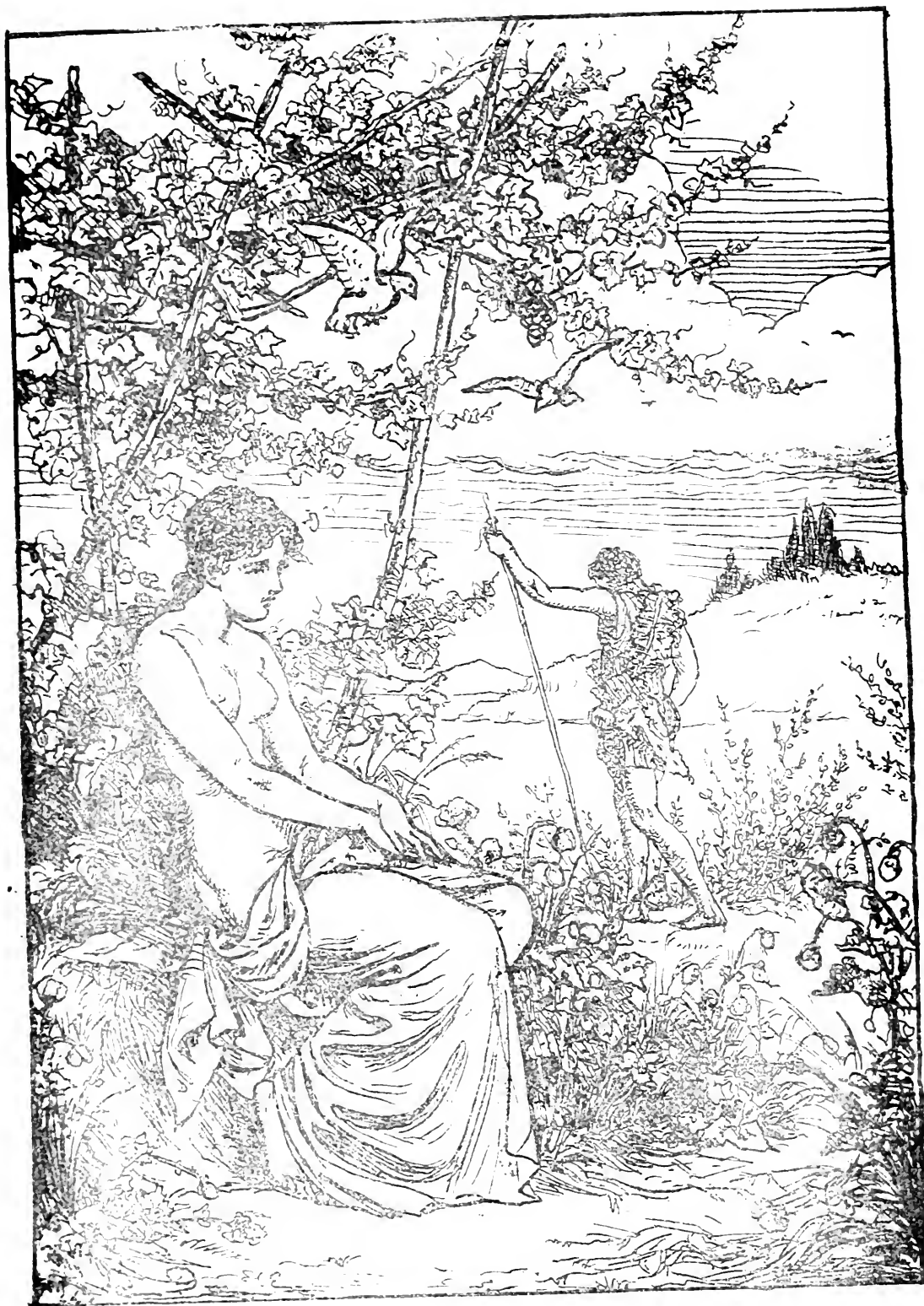
## FRIENDSHIP.

WHEN Time was in an idle wandering mood  
And stooping slowly down on even pinion,  
Where with a leisure like his own I stood,  
He offered me one gift from his dominion,  
With half a note of laughter in his voice  
To know his wings were longer than my choice.

The falling star had found the breast of night,  
And hidden there. Dreams of to-morrow's dawn  
Quieted all the birds. The moon upright  
Drooped wonder in the sleep of nymph and fawn  
Who laughed without awaking. The deep wood  
Had comforted her murmurous multitude.

Oh, large and chainless Father, hear and tarry,  
I have a friend ; but thou in thy wide hands  
More treasure stolen than thy wings can carry,  
Thou tireless robber of all seas and lands.  
Thou wilt give nought, saving one day, the End ;  
Yet take my thanks, and leave me still my friend.





The Youth Warned P 13

## THE YOUTH WARNED.

THE tender dove is fiery-eyed  
And purple bloom the poppy gardens ;  
Leave the maiden ere her pride  
The woman's bosom hardens.

## THE CHILD-MAID'S COMPLAINT.

MY little Doll, if only now you knew,  
I have so long been labouring for you ;  
I have so thought, and thought, and borne such care,  
If only you could feel but half your share,  
White threads would grow within your yellow hair.

You only smile, and smile with arms out-put,  
With neck stiff twisted, and with upheld foot,  
And eyes that look far past me at the ceiling.  
I see that dreadful scratch is long in healing,  
But, little Doll, I think you 've little feeling.

Do you remember sitting on my knees  
That summer day I made your first chemise,  
And looking so much prouder of white lace,  
Than I remember feeling in your place ?  
O little Doll, you have a boastful face !



I've walked you on every pleasant day ;  
I never give you books ; you always play ;  
I shared with you the trimming of my hat ;  
I'd give you food, if you had taste for that ;  
And always I defend you from the cat.

And you, O little Doll, why can't you see,  
You never care a bit to think of me ?  
I wonder if my child will be like this  
When I am old, and Mrs., and not Miss.  
It's practice, I suppose ; come, one more kiss.

## NATURAL ENEMIES.

THE Maid was born a Mother  
And the Youth was born a Maid ;  
The little girl imperious,  
And the little boy afraid.

Till scornful women taught the Boy,  
And laughing men the Maid,  
To hide the heart imperious,  
And reverence afraid.

And then they met so suddenly  
At eve when prayers were prayed,  
And fell in debts of promises  
That still in tears are paid.





## THE MAID WELL LOVED.

THIS is my love, this perfect maid.

She knows not why my days rejoice,  
And serve unheeding to be paid ;  
She has not heard the arousing voice,  
Nor frowned nor felt the task of choice,  
Nor learned of Love to read his show,  
Therefore she knows not what I know.

Her silence is continual feast,  
Continual music her repose ;  
There is no shadow of the least  
That Love's great summer sunshine throws  
That lies within her as she goes ;  
The spring-time laughs, the rivers flow,  
But yet she knows not what I know.

The sounding of the world's one hour  
Will soon be heard, the light be thrown,  
The eyes, grown wise, will know their power,  
The lips new words and wonders shown.  
Then shall in fulness all be known,—  
The secret of the years that go,—  
And she will tell me what I know.

## THE MAID'S CONFESSION.

THE life of love is all I know ;  
Not earth beneath, nor power above,  
Nor why the stars return and go,  
Or voice of men grows loud below  
In envious crowds that strive and move :  
I only know the life of love.

No more I feel ; the rest is grey ;  
The world is like a shadowy wheel  
That turns around me day by day ;  
Some kills, and some it whirls away,  
Or wounds, and these I strive to heal,  
But life of love is all I feel.

The voices come, I know and hear,  
And some are sweet, and weary some,  
And others make my spirit fear,  
To know they die. But one is near

And warm. Far off the others hum,  
But not for me their voices come.

Such things I see, but do not seek  
As love knows and requires of me :  
The little clouds, of love that speak,  
And round my feet the grasses weak  
Or gathered flowers upon my knee  
With pale green leaves :—such things I see.

What mean the rest? I do not leave  
Good gifts in pride because the best  
I have already. Oft I grieve  
To know no more. I well believe  
That other things are sweet and blest,  
But I have love ;—what mean the rest ?

The life of love for me is all.  
Spring opened in the flowers above  
And Autumn saw the fruitage fall,  
And now the wintry storms appal,  
But the whole year was sweet enough,  
To me it brought—the life of love.



## THE MAID ILL-WARNED.

‘ I HEARD long since the mothers talking slowly,  
 Of tempters’ words and ways that end in shaming,  
 Of men all weak, that seemed the strong and holy,—  
 Weak in sacred strife forbid for naming,—  
 Weak to save the young, and pure, and lowly.

‘ All could see,’ they said, ‘ with daily seeing,  
 Perils round my coming, round my going,  
 Perils I must flee with silent fleeing,—  
 Perils I must flee, but not with knowing,—  
 Yet must flee, they told with stern agreeing.

‘ Now mothers ye are gone, my own and others,  
 Gone are the needless voices of your chiding.  
 Men all have been to me as careless brothers,  
 None forewarned me of their thoughts deriding,—  
 Time derides : I am not of the mothers.’

## THE SEWING-GIRL.

‘WHY go you forth in muslin clad  
And tulle and white barège ?  
The Winter sky is cold and sad,  
The Spring in chains and cage.’

‘I have not saved enough to wear  
This fur and cloth like you,—  
You waste your words and waste your care :  
Wait till the skies are blue.

‘Last summer I was always dressed  
As any lady seemed :  
I laughed the best, I wore the best,  
The best of dreams I dreamed.

‘ And now I bear a little cold  
 And hear your laugh a while :—  
 I saw you pinched when I was bold,  
 And tired when I could smile.

‘ And when the summer shines again  
 And flowers come out to play,  
 You ’ll count and save and pine with pain :  
 I shall be wise and gay.’

So said the shivering girl aloud,  
 But in her heart she knew  
 She could not brave the prudent crowd  
 Until the skies were blue.

Her little heart had been too poor  
 To know what wisdom fears,  
 And soon its robe from door to door  
 Was dragged and stained with tears.

Too soon her eyes with love were bright,  
Her face too crimson glowed,  
But waxen white, before the night  
The place of kissing showed.

A keen cold Spring had laid her dead.  
Who knows if this be well ?  
'She was already lost,' they said,  
And sighed and mused of Hell.

I pray we may not pardon seek  
Long after hers is won,  
God made His poor sweet daughter weak,  
Not the Eternal Son.

## THE OUTCAST.

WHEN God the Ever-living makes  
     His home in deathly Winter frost,  
 And God the Ever-loving wakes  
     In hardening eyes of women lost,  
 Then through the midnight moves or wraith ;  
 Open the door, for this is Faith.

Open the door and bring her in  
     And stir thy heart's poor fires that shrink,  
 Ah, fear to see her pale and thin,  
     Give love and dreams to eat and drink ;  
 For Faith may faint in wandering by :—  
 In that day thou shalt surely die.

## AT BEST.

IN summer when the orchard speaks  
    In tiny thunder of the bees ;  
IN summer when the saddle creaks  
    And cattle darken round the trees,  
The lark was battling through the blue  
To show the world that love was new.

The leaden sky forgot the lark,  
    The trees the sun, while o'er the snow  
The woolly sheep were damp and dark  
    And birds sat shivering in a row  
While windy hours denied the blue,  
But love, alas ! was always new.

I found, beside her narrow bed

A poor old woman who, they told,  
Had children's children's children dead,

She saw my thought ; so old ! so old !  
And said, ' As old as Love, 'tis true,'  
And wept, for love is always new.

## THE INEVITABLE.

THREE Sorrows, on the path of narrow pacing  
Walk silent in the likeness of three thieves,  
And none may hold from them with sternness facing,  
Nor save by flight the tribute each receives.

The first one takes the laughter that believes ;  
The second the poor hopefulness that fears ;  
The last, by chimney nooks and cottage eaves,  
Steals from old eyes their little horde of tears.







## THE SACK OF EDEN.

WHEN Life the best of Eden-garden fruit  
 Shook, like a breath at evening, from the trees,  
 And Love stood by, ever prepared to shoot,  
 With arrows drawn, and laughing with high ease,  
 He said, ' You give of those, but I of these.'

Life shook one tree ; the little acorn fell.  
 Love slipped the string ; a friendship flew to men.  
 Life gave the fruit from wild-rose of light smell.  
 'Twas bitter, and Love gave the after pain  
 Following a little kiss not hoped again.

Life touched the apple, red and golden green ;  
 Red next the sun, gold sideways, and behind  
 The pale leaf colour. Then Love pierced unseen  
 Beauty with love of her own form pure-lined,  
 That blushed, was bought, or in pale shadow pined.

Therefore the apple was the fruit that drove  
 Sweet Beauty forth from her first Paradise,  
 Where joyed she ever till she grew to crave  
 The praise of her fair body in outward eyes,  
 Since when she, for new blushing, pines and sighs.

Life plucked the gourd. Love gave the high esteem  
 Swift climbing over life from one fair deed.  
 But when Fame, faithless as a summer stream  
 Falls silent of her little babbling creed  
 Soon fading and all starved with hungry need.

Life gave the fig, that even a summer old  
 Is not ripe till the golden juice breaks through.  
 Love gave the love that's born in being told.  
 Life plucked the half-seen grape bunch where it grew.  
 'I give desire,' said Love. The arrow flew.

Life drew up roots from underneath the ground  
 And gave, and Love sent arrows through a cloud,

And these were feathered with the faith that's found  
 In loves that in the hearts of women proud,  
 Or else not fair, lie still in secret shroud.

Then from the high palm swaying fell more fierce  
 Fruit that struck hard as iron on armour rings,  
 Though white within, could but a maiden pierce.  
 Love chose an arrow forth with brazen wings  
 And there sent flying the lighter loves of kings.

'So seem they,' replied Life, with gentle speech,—  
 'Yet is not this a masque of Cupid's art?'  
 Then gave the date, the cherry, plum, and peach.  
 Love smiled, and flew the sweet and outward part,—  
 Soft lips, of whom love but themselves at heart.

The orange, then, whose flowers and fruit unite  
 Life gave, and Love gave hope, and joy beside :  
 Sweet hope upon the dream of ripe delight  
 Laid as a crown.—Thereat Life sighed and cried,—  
 'Love, crown me with this flower as thy bride.'

But e'er Love reached to crown her, Life embraced  
 And shook a hundred trees that downward hurled,  
 Unnamed and rich from branches interlaced,  
 Strange fruit until the earth was all impearled,  
 More like the starry heavens than the dim world.

Then three by three, in flight, Love upward sped,  
 Arrows unnamed, and joys that no men tell,  
 And none could know their number. Then life said,  
 While still they flew, and still the fruitage fell,  
 'You will lose all.' Love answered, 'It is well.'

'Why is joy sweet, and why shall grief be borne?'  
 Life cried, and shook the Tree of Knowledge rare.  
 The arrows were all sped; the bow was worn.  
 Love spread his crimson wings in sunset fair,  
 And followed his fleet arrows through the air.

# MALEDICTION.

BUT there 's a sort of tenderness  
     To know how little while it reigns,  
 Even while we bear with doubleness  
     And while our name is stained with stains  
 The gate of ended weariness  
 Opens and shows forgetfulness.

The man who spoke so slightly  
     And took away my peaceful right  
 Is dead as wax and cold as sea,  
     And still as earth, and blind as night ;  
 And there 's a sort of sanctity  
 About him now that 's not in me.

Shall I have better reverence when

I lie in silence as he lies ?

I will not wish for it again.

And yet, how well could we despise

By right, almost divine, if men

Might be immortal now and then !



## NAMELESS.

COME little Silence, pleasant nun,  
And sit you here by me ;  
Think not the veil shall be undone  
That clothes your chastity ;  
Nor fear that I shall ask a fold  
To hide from man or maid  
The anger that may not be told  
And comes to thee for aid.  
Yet I have words I would not tell,  
So sit by me and love me well.

Oh no, thou little quiet face,  
Thy great eyes question me ;  
But it were ever much disgrace  
Were I to tell to thee

The memories bitter to the end  
 That press my lips to-night ;  
 For he that wronged me was my friend,  
 I would not speak nor fight ;  
 Then hush me with thy finger cool  
 So kind to many a Fortune's fool.

What, art thou going? I must find  
 Sport to forget his name ;  
 I'll beat the bushes of my mind  
 And rouse some worthier game,  
 Lest I betray what I should keep  
 When thou too soon art fled.  
 An injury should die in sleep  
 And be forgot when dead.  
 What, art thou gone ; quite scared away  
 Because I cried, I pray thee stay ?

## CHANGE.

As travellers look upon that whirling sea  
 Where round and round the vessels ever spin,  
 And spinning still go down, where none may be  
 Of all that whirl, and whirling enter in,  
 Sifted or stayed, a race where none shall win  
 And none shall rest. On this looking awhile  
 And moving as we look, who may begin  
 To give his heart a little ease, or smile,  
 Or joy, while Change drives him with patience vile.

Yet though the journey be so dark to see  
 Each hour is as a charm unwound and wound,  
 And the waves following, and the wind so free,  
 And the far-flying stars with solemn sound,  
 And the bright birds, and the soft clouds around.

And Time that going so fast yet stays so long,  
 And questioning, with answers never found  
 Yet ever hoped,—delights, and loves, and song  
 Dress Change up in their robes and hide his wrong.

The circling of the days from hour to hour,—  
 Each dawn arising partly out of night,  
 And partly out of sleep whose fateful power  
 More rough than waking life, more grim with fright,  
 With grief more hopeless and with joy less bright  
 Is hunted like an evil beast away,—  
 For this is he, the Python, whom the might  
 Of sweet Apollo coming with the day  
 Slays without sound, as divine arrows slay,—

The circling of the days and of the years,—  
 The change of ages, of the earth and seas,—  
 The change, so unbelieved, of joy to tears,—  
 How did this come and go?—from peaceful ease  
 To sudden strength, from black to green-leaf trees,

From snow to sunshine, and to love from hate,—  
 Which of all these is loveliest?—which of these  
 Did Change most sin to spoil again, or Fate  
 Folding away leave us most desolate ?

Who knows of this ? We know that there has been,  
 And that there shall be, death and change and fate.  
 Who sees the good or ill ? We all have seen  
 Love lost too quickly or achieved too late.  
 We do but meet beside the brazen gate,  
 A touch of hands, a word of love, a tear,  
 The lips to lips, the heart to heart, the mate  
 Finding his mate, or missing, and a drear  
 Sound of swift closing and the path is clear.

Then what is left to love, since all things change  
 If we love not the changes ? They as well  
 Do plead for love. The colours re-arrange  
 The sunset and the sea, and with a spell  
 Do bind us to their movements, while the bell

Rings the last prayer of evening, and the sky  
 Is prayed to give us angels to repel  
 The fear of night-time for faint men who die.  
 'Night is mine too,' Change whispers, 'it shall fly.'

We love not thee, O Change, nor day nor night,  
 Nor the unmoving Centre only still  
 Of ordered things, that stands with tireless might,  
 And only lives and allows life, to kill.  
 It would we hate, but love is near. We fill  
 One golden hour with love's eternity.  
 Not all the little cup of life shall spill  
 But to the lip of who has love is free.  
 Thou seest, O Change, thou hatest ; but not we.







## L O S S.

WHILE all the red procession of the sun  
Moved with unplanned obedience, while for fewness  
The faint stars in the coming twilight dun  
Were trembling near, one love whose cloudy newness  
Was newer than this pageant, still begun,

And ended never,—a young love that needed,  
As all loves need, a tender hand of Fate  
To guide its wandering hours that no hand heeded,  
Fell suddenly away, too soon, too late,  
And left old shadow as new hope receded.

For this lost love in strain of weary war  
Strove with the heavy discord all in vain,  
And found no refuge firm on any shore,  
But swept between swift sea and level rain,  
A tempest cold where many strayed before,

And wandered into the remote abyss,  
 Beyond the ocean belt whose whirling brink  
 Trembles like meeting lips of those who kiss  
 In madness, knowing no joy is left to drink,  
 When they have ended the new wine of this.

Here down the hollow cliff cling Death and Fear,  
 And far beneath lie Calm and Hoplessness,  
 And ever-falling Space whose limit near  
 Is never reached, with old Regretfulness  
 On wing, that like a bat, lives hovering here :

Down this deep well, whose truth no fathom reaches,  
 The young love lost to-night fell swift and cold.  
 It spread white hands, and called in prayerful speeches,  
 And pleaded with new pain, before untold,  
 And sought to save its life as Wisdom teaches.

And sought to live in dying, as Faith aspired,  
 But those who loved, each for the other's grief  
 Was planned before the time when Time required  
 Old Memory to serve him, or Belief  
 To fly before and hunt new hours desired.

Each for the other's grief was surely made ;  
 How many have been glad, for love, to meet ?  
 How many sad to part ? How few have stayed  
 Sadly together while their love was sweet,  
 Injurious both while either inly prayed

To save the other at any price of heart !  
 Yet the strange love, across the line of love,  
 Struck through to-day has felt the eternal dart,  
 Of him, the Eternal Huntsman from above,  
 By whom who loved to-day, to-night shall part.

Let them not seek a morrow, let the day  
 With fruitfulness of wonder satiate these ;  
 Let them return and choose a separate way,  
 Lest on the morrow when they look for ease,  
 Fate may surround their hearts with long dismay.

The sudden stream no faster flows than falling  
 The patient sands upon their silent hill :  
 Bury them deep, O sands, where none, appalling,  
 May tell us of the grief dead loves fulfil,  
 Or turn our ears to hear their sorrow calling.

Enough to know no one eternal measure  
Shall parcel out our joy by chance or Time,  
Nor rareness nor bright light of flowers we treasure,  
Suffice to turn opposing sounds to rhyme,  
Though each with love be strong, and fair with pleasure.

Then hopeless let those love who live in changes,  
Hopeless, yet tenderly. Be well content  
And well beware, for ever Memory ranges.  
Make peace with Memory, your hour being spent,  
Lest you bid Love farewell, whom Fate estranges.





TO EARTH, MOTHER OF ALL.

O MOTHER of the hills, forgive our towers !

O Mother of the clouds, forgive our dreams !

O Mother Earth, forgive ; thy dreams are flowers.

O pity, Mother Earth, thy tears are streams !

The silent Mother of the far-off look

Waiting until the unknown hour arrives

Sat in the firmament, her chimney nook,—

Fast flies her spinning of the thread of lives.

We have grown foolish, Mother, in long fear.

Our hearts are angry, though our hearts shall die.

We cry, and deem in crying thou shalt hear :

Are we not also of thy brood who cry ?

The silent Mother turning, frowned and sighed ;

Nor saw whose messenger received her thread.

She too was angry. ‘ Who are ye ? ’ she cried.

‘ Vain hope the living ; vain despair the dead.’

## ESTO LUX.

AROUND my path the golden bird,  
 The flying sun, his circle bends,  
 And when the Night her curtain lends  
 I hear more near her wondrous word.

‘I am within you,’ murmurs she,  
 ‘You fear me not, your life is there :  
 Send forth the child upon the air  
 To kiss my cold eternity.

‘I am the Mother and the Wife,  
 The world is on the Father’s knee.  
 I laid it there : He smiled on me.  
 Be you the mother of your life.’

Then Mother Night upon her knee  
 Received my life, my little one ;  
 For Love was Light before the sun,  
 And all things that have been shall be.



## THE MOON.

AGAIN the pretty moon has come  
To play with us awhile.  
We 'll scarcely cease our wonder dumb,  
And give her smile for smile,

Ere she will leave the heavy night  
All to its own sad way,  
While we have only sleep for light,  
In between day and day.

I have not yet had time to ease  
My heart of last month's pain.  
My sorrow is dark on land and seas,  
Though the light lives again.

But now as I forget the rest,  
Of all the moonless weeks,  
And open out my happy breast  
Just when the new light speaks.

And make my full companionship  
With moon and mystery,  
She'll let them hide her silver lip  
And bind her down from me.

And all the shadowy, fairy world  
Around my house and field,  
With dew-drops jewelled and impearled,  
Must fold her cloak and yield.

I had begun to know the tree,  
The grass, the glade, the hill ;  
They had begun to dream like me ;  
We should be dreaming still.

I had begun to share with these  
A special, untold thing :  
This tree was not of daylight trees,  
And knew far more than spring.

With only one more night of moon  
The world would all grow new.  
But, like a tale, it ends too soon  
Just when it all seemed true.

The stars all watch, the stars all wait  
High over field and shore ;  
Then, pretty Moon, we will not hate,  
Your children miss you more.

## NIGHT.

O QUIET Night, sister of Solitude,  
     Tell, if the whisper of the hour may tell,  
 To one who prays where never dreams intrude,  
     To live alone with thee and love thee well,  
     Now while the unseen reverent valley bell  
 With velvet on her brazen circle bound,  
     Softens her hour-affrighting clangour rude,  
 While dark air drinks the soft renewing sound  
     Whose fitly timed intoning measures our midnight  
     mood,—

Tell now what presence in the footless shade  
     Fills all the void with strange companionhood,  
 What faces near of unseen man or maid,  
     What conjured flowers or what enchanted wood,  
     What spirit-holding trees, what fairies good

Have made the dark so full, the empty dark  
 So peopled with all sweetness, that afraid,  
 Who love thee well tremble to hear the lark  
 And feel the fresh dawn-wind comfortless and dismayed.

Often and oft again on mountains cold  
 On sun-hot stones yet warm in chilliest night,  
 When stars are still, or labouring clouds have rolled,  
 On long, deserted roads of glimmering white,  
 On new-mown hay with scent of dear delight,  
 Or under ruinous temples all alone,  
 Who has not heard the secret softly told  
 By earth and sky, by carved or sea-worn stone,  
 By all that dead men loved in happier lives of old?

For the same night we look on has been seen,  
 The same half hinted world has felt the tread,  
 The same high moon, the very stars have been,  
 When men of old might lift a loftier head,  
 When giants lived, whom daylight knows are dead,  
 Whom crowds outnumber and whom dwarfs deny.  
 But gentle night that covers all things mean,

All shameful sights, all sins of men who die,  
 Brings these once more alive, hero, and sage, and queen.

By day our world is not the world they knew,  
 But had we stood beside them many a night  
 And seen with these the delicate moon that grew  
 From a faint slender leaf to fruitage bright  
 Not else than even as now the sacred sight  
 Would then have showed. The half-seen earth as now,  
 The sea with duskier mantle on her blue,  
 The tender wave that gentlest winds allow,  
 As we now see this hour, so they, the happier few.

We love the night-time for their far-off bliss,  
 We love the heavy hills transformed by her.  
 Who fear in dreams to hold the world amiss?  
 Who keep from night her tribute? Who demur?  
 In hearts more deep than daylight powers can stir,  
 Down in the peaceful chamber of belief  
 A whisper tells,—‘ This moon of ours, even this  
 They saw ! They lay upon this harvest sheaf,—  
 And the warm wind we handle trembled beneath their  
 kiss.

For all these things the Night true love shall drink,  
 In all her dew. But most one single gift  
 Wins me to find her when the day shall sink,  
 At whose low hour more high my pleasures lift,  
 And joys from whose pure gold no sand may sift,  
 For night-time brings her sister whom I love,  
 Her sister Solitude. Let no man think  
 There grows a statelier joy than this above ;  
 Here is the footless cliff, come tremble upon the brink.

The inmost heart of Heaven, O Solitude,  
 Feels thee within her centre. The wide wing  
 Of all the flying stars in multitude,—  
 Their outmost pinion—fans no different thing.  
 Well know they as they ever fly and sing,  
 That thou who fliest and singest not art more  
 Than they or we, of more eternal mood,  
 Of higher reach remote, of depth to endure  
 Till all that once were thine shall feel thy power  
 renewed.

## A WOMAN SEEN IN DREAMS.

I saw a lady tall and slim ;  
Her soul behind her silent face  
Was like a greyhound lean of limb,  
And restless with a hungry grace.  
She came when summer nights were dim,  
And sunset in the silent space

Had left a little secret ray,  
And darkness had not time to grow,  
And Night had still the hand of Day,  
As in the utmost hills where snow  
All summer scarcely melts away,  
Or like in childhood long ago.



Where noon was curtained round with dreams  
 That linger until night returns,  
 As through the light their inward streams  
 Flow on to where the whirlpool churns,  
 And draws down every thought that seems  
 Fuel for the nether fire that burns.

Mad Sleep, wild Whirlpool all have feared !  
 Calm Sleep, whose waters all have swum !  
 Light Sleep, whose silver foam has seemed  
 Like dawn before the day had come !  
 I saw a lady tall and weird,  
 Whose hungry soul was fierce, but dumb.

Thou didst not tell me she was Queen,  
 But I, thy servant, knew her well.  
 She bore the mark of those who lean  
 Too long above the fumes of Hell,  
 Until upon their brow is seen  
 The gloomy signs that peace repel.

She bore upon her hands the trace  
     Of pain and rest and love and loss ;  
 Yet bore she not in any place  
     The tomb-stone velvet stain of moss ;  
 Nor was there shining in her face  
     The crescent, nor the sacred cross.

Too strange for love, too young for peace,  
     Too pitiful for endless wars,  
 When only pain might bring release  
     She fought, and won the wound that pours,  
 With silent streams that still increase,  
     Near the eternal ocean shores.

For, ever where she gave a wound,  
     For him that bore, her own heart bled ;  
 And when with weary battle swooned  
     The friend she fought, and comforted,  
 Then she rose up and softly tuned  
     His harp, and sang for anger dead.

No one might hold her life for long,  
     Or rule her long, or dare to keep  
 His hand upon her shoulder strong,  
     With yoke of love, or hope to reap  
 The fruit she sowed, or learn her song,  
     Save only thou, and I, O Sleep.

O Sleep ! O Wakefulness of heart !  
     O last escape from wilderness !  
 O sudden home in every part  
     Of all the path of homelessness !  
 O Land with never tower or chart !  
     O Sea of dark tempestuousness !

In thee I met her first, and told  
     Thy furthest secret in her ear.  
 I turned without the terrors cold  
     That lined her cloak, and bound the fear  
 That like a leaden hand laid hold,  
     And reached across from year to year.

For all her woe was false remorse,  
 And all her fear was pity keen,  
 And all her straying from the course,  
 And all her thirst and hunger lean,  
 Were sorrow at her own heart's force,  
 And wonder she could not be Queen.

Yet she was Queen, but had not felt  
 Her crown, nor known her country yet,  
 Refusing Earth where rain-drops pelt,  
 Though like a lover's face was wet  
 The face of Earth that wept and knelt,  
 Till thou and I and she were met.

But thou and I and she, O Sleep,  
 Are made as one, and safely tread  
 Upon the ever-breathing deep,  
 That springs beneath, and widely spread  
 Still opens far as on we sweep,  
 So swiftly Fate is now outsped.

Now knows she well her realm, and knows  
 First pride was good, but might not last,  
 And hunger good, a hound that grows  
 The stronger, flying light and fast,  
 But Sleep is best, for Time that mows  
 Strikes vainly as the dream goes past.

In wakeful hours we might have sought,  
 She for her throne and I for her,  
 How many days? But thou hast taught  
 The path to each dim wanderer,  
 Nor longer travelling distraught,  
 Nor knowing where our thresholds were.

Therefore I praise thee, Sleep, and pray  
 For her who spares to use her right,  
 And live as Queen from day to day,—  
 Crown her for me from night to night,  
 And I will woo her soul to stay  
 And gleam through all thy palace bright.

## TWELFTH NIGHT.

Ah, dream-known love, behold my masquerade  
 Comes now with winter joys and winter fears,—  
 Fears waiting warmth, and pleasures frost-afraid.  
 Now sleep and love have risen from feast of tears :  
 They have enough ; their hour of comfort nears :  
 We freely gave them both our hearts to break ;  
 They pressed us hard, but spared, and undismayed  
 We turn the wheel of Night whose children wake  
 From the great deep, in all her power arrayed.

The masque begins before our closing eyes  
 Have warmed with drooping lids the wells beneath :  
 Our masque begins, like mutable autumn skies  
 Or shades of clouds following on mountain heath.  
 Out leaping like a sword from velvet sheath







The bright slight visions come, so keen and free,  
 Or even as the sea-gulls white arise  
 One after one above the dark blue sea,  
 Flying on the sunbeam's bosom like the light foam  
 that flies.

All unaware Silence has come and gone,  
 But well we saw her face, with lips apart,  
 And one still finger, lying her mouth upon—  
 The other hand between her throat and heart,  
 She sailed across the chamber like a dart  
 That wings the summer sky from long-drawn bow ;  
 We saw her shoeless feet that waken none,  
 As in and out at night unheard they go ;  
 Shall we love her the best? Comes there some  
 worthier one ?

Who went out after like a twilight flying,  
 Or like a Winter that forgets to blow  
 His tempest while the rain-dark trees are drying ?  
 A dull grey shadow between mist and snow.  
 Yet at the first did many a colour go

Glowing across her face, and many a train  
 Of robes she drew, like to an actress trying  
 To figure queens, and all their proudness show ;  
 Half smiling leaped she in, but crept away half crying.

Shall we love her the best ? We saw her name  
 Upon her turning shoulder,—Memory.  
 We called her not, because alone she came,  
 Who might with all the Muses, three by three,  
 Have trooped toward us in sweet company :  
 For she their mother is. They sing, they play,  
 They fill the world with sweet delight and fame,  
 To win her to endure her life's long day ;  
 They rouse her, being in faint, and bear her forth,  
 being lame.

No, no ; her daughters only, never she  
 May win our heart of love and flowing praise.  
 Like streams from highest hills toward the sea,  
 They come most musical from loftiest ways,  
 From where the ever-watchful mountains raise





Their calm above the quarrel of wind and hail,  
 Or from men's hearts as high as these, know we,  
 The never-slighted Muses without fail  
 Tribute receive free given, service from all the free.

The Muses only, in their turn have power  
 To fitly serve our joy and soothe our grief;  
 They only in the pauses of the shower,  
 Like birds in Spring upon the dripping leaf,  
 Sing loud to make the wintry pain more brief.  
 Dead Joy they lift, new breathing, from his tomb,  
 They plead with dull Despair in each soft flower,  
 Tear-blinded grief, out of his darkened room,  
 Entice they, showing how God has known as bitter  
 an hour.

Our masque shall see them come, and love them well.  
 But Memory, who followed Silence first,  
 Because Love knows the tale that she would tell,  
 Shall not unkindly go from us accurst;  
 Love knows we yet may wish to see reversed

Our lives within her mirror, while we bend,  
 Watching from far-off hours, how this night fell,  
 Reading the lost beginning from the end,—  
 Then shall we glean her echoes, nor the least words  
 repel.

But one comes now whose footsteps disarrange,  
 And drive all other shadows from their place,—  
 Love,—Love himself,—his look again more strange  
 Than when we saw him last ; within his face  
 More light ; his hair more tossed in windy race ;  
 Upon his hand more high the starting veins ;  
 His blood in circling wild more seen to range  
 Beneath his breast until his throat it gains ;  
 And ever, upon his lip, some fear-reminding change.

Love, is it not enough that always near,  
 And half seen through you hide behind our lives,  
 Like to a hiding nymph in pretty fear,  
 When footfalls tell the hot-lipped faun arrives ?  
 Deep in our hearts, like bees within the hives







Thou murmurest, building walls of sweet on sweet,  
 Unseen, unresting at thy labours dear,  
 Thy flight forgotten, and thy broad wings fleet,  
 And all the unmeasured dome serene and calm and  
 clear.

Thy bandage thou hast taken from thine eyes,  
 Was this to bid us bind thy unused wings?  
 It is enough; we know thou knowest the skies:  
 We know thou fliest above the lark that sings.  
 O Love, we know all far mysterious things  
 Save one, that, seeing thee now, we cannot fail  
 To feel new trouble in our hearts arise,  
 And even while with thoughts of Time grown pale,  
 An arrogant peace of heart, like runners that win the  
 prize.

This is great joy, and yet we scarce desire  
 Too often thee to see, so strong, so near,  
 Thy children burned are we, who fear thy fire,  
 Yet must we ever grasp thy beacon clear,  
 Now kneel we silent, and thy words revere.

Speak to us, Love ; or if thy wisdom high  
 Far from thy parted lips to-night retire,  
 Sign with thy hand,—rebuke if low we lie,—  
 More thy great wing whose wind alone can lift us  
 higher.

‘ Servants who serve, we truly of no choice,  
 But thirst of heart for heart’s diviner drinking,’  
 So answered Love in his deep ocean voice,  
 With murmur as of waves,—‘ your gift unshrinking  
 While still you give, in humbleness down sinking  
 I do receive, and hoard your tribute-tears,  
 Though dark the hour, for day your grief annoys.  
 Knowing me near as now, you feel my fears ;  
 Joy seen at hand is terror ; only far hopes rejoice :

‘ Endure ; endure, but closely hold and sure,  
 More closely hold my faith, as face on face,  
 Until this vision vanish from before  
 Your eyes, whose sorrow I know, and leave in place  
 A sweet consoling every hour to grace.

The time of need is coming near. Hold fast  
 My friendship that is yours for evermore.  
 So while the strain of seeing me near goes past,  
 With aid of sadness looked for, bid the wild soul endure.'

We have obeyed, and surely now he goes,  
 Is it not well, dear dream, we have obeyed ?  
 Let us return to hope and to repose,  
 He has not faded as the others fade,  
 Nor floated out of reach, nor distant strayed,  
 But through us passed in our hearts made nest ;  
 We sought a masque to please the evening's close,  
 But stronger truth came near and all possessed,  
 Peace ; we no more desire new shadows or more  
 shows.

Peace : for what form after Love's face is known ?  
 None welcome and none worshipped, none that cheers,  
 Unless the Shadow of Great Peace alone.  
 He comes,—a thought of rest,—no form appears.  
 He leans toward us from the unknown years,

And from an hour unknown he holds a hand,  
 So small in seeming, like a child's ungrown,—  
 For first of life and love to understand,  
 Much must we see go by, in hours more near well  
 shown.

Our masquers go. Untold the rest we feel,  
 Unbodied and unnamed; unknown of these.  
 We thread the caves of Sleep and wind the reel.  
 Her haunt is deeper than the Indian seas,  
 More mirrored stars, more pearls, more mysteries.  
 We carve her silent stream with floating light,  
 As emerald carved beneath a vessel's keel,—  
 Yielding to full persuasion of soft night,  
 While on his bare-foot path Time and his scythe may  
 steal.

## THE SHEPHERD.

SHEPHERD flute me tenderly

A tune for summer fair :

Little grasses slenderly

Dance with summer there :

All along the valley going

Like a second river flowing,

Shepherd flute me tenderly

A tune for summer fair.

Music feeds the flowers growing,

Music fills the river flowing.

What should empty morning do

With her dome of open blue

Where the little birds are winging ?

They have given their music ringing

Far and soft and tenderly

Along the valley fair.

Flute me now more loud and clear,  
 'Tis the noon of all the year.  
 Flute me till the day rejoices,  
 Till the mountains find their voices,  
 Till the trees replying often  
 Wave us in where shadows soften,  
 Till the sun his vintage olden  
 Pours abroad on evening golden.  
 Then bring home your fluting slowly,  
     Lest the twilight breezes moan :  
 Night is lighting candles holy  
     Round the far eternal throne :  
     Pray we live not all alone.

Flute again more tenderly  
     To the fair of fair :  
 See her waiting slenderly  
     In the moonlit air.

## A MEETING.

ALONE and wandering, far and late,  
     Along a moonlit mountain moor  
 Sudden I saw the face of Fate,  
     And knew the ancient frown she bore.  
 Beneath it glowed the unsleeping look  
 Of eyes long pondering on her book  
 Whose leaves turn one relentless way.  
 Wherein, for ever, night or day,  
 Is never any word but one ;—  
 She went to chain the unrisen sun.

I would not let her pass me by  
     But stood before her, though as froth  
 Before the wind, and asked her why  
     In our old world are grief and wrath.

In vain we laugh. In vain we sing.  
 Old anger lulled to slumbering  
 Awakes up stronger.

Then she stood,  
 Saying, 'Grief and wrath have earned their ends  
 But may not end. Companionhood  
 That gives you all the dead for friends  
 Will go when grief and anger go.

For those your unseen brothers knew  
 Poor foolish fury, and brief woe.

Your peace of heart would hide the view  
 You hold of them, as light may hide

Your living world from dream and sleep.  
 Then were they dead as none have died

Should beating hearts no image keep.  
 Oh, wish not thee poor multitudes

A double death so dark and deep.  
 But when new grief or wrath intrudes,

Brood on the immemorial wrong  
 And pass in sorrow and rage and song.



## AN ARABIAN PROVERB.

‘Man travels in the dark, and man’s fate travels in the dark to meet him.’

WHO comes alone across the mountains hoary ?

Who comes alone beneath the high white moon ?

The mountains to the mountain tell her story ;

The midnights to the midnight sing her tune.

One link, one last, of every chained succession,

One mountain, the last pathway of the hills,

Receives the wisdom of the long procession,

The gathered murmur of the foaming rills.

The End, the End, the burden of their sounding

That follows through the dawning and the dark,—

The End is marching while the deer are bounding,

The End is crawling by the climbing lark.

We go to meet her in the haste of travel,  
 We go to meet her in the warm, soft sleep ;  
 We spin our busy web, or we unravel,  
 We lose the path, but the appointment keep.

Long, long, and long, the bird on open pinion  
 Flies near the golden breathing of the sun,  
 But yet his unseen shadow has dominion :  
 He sinks ; his shadow and himself are one.

O moment, little moment, thou hast rounded  
 The full proud years, thou servant of the End !  
 Thou doorkeeper that openest the unbounded,  
 Thou last companion, wilt thou be our friend ?

O mingling of the motherhoods ! O giving  
 That bearest off the gifts that close and cling !  
 O sudden Truth, more naked than all living !  
 Be our white bride and bear the eternal ring.

## THE SEVEN ATMOSPHERES.

Too long the sevenfold wreath of air we breathed  
 And saw them not seven garlands hung for praise—  
 As round the garden-god in simpler days  
 A sevenfold prayer of fruits and flowers was wreathed ;  
 And every savour and symbol of fruit and flower  
 Bore separate honour to the god's one power,  
 Hiding and showing and knowing him always.

Our lips, the garland outermost, the air,  
 The common daily air, like grass unsown,  
 The world's unlaboured easiest robe is shown,  
 No more to help, unpraised, sweet life and fair.  
 Like milk it feeds the infant in his growing,  
 Until his eyes with thirst of wordless knowing  
 Breathe in with sight an air to lips unknown.

But garland within, garland in perfection  
 Lies folded still. We bow and breathe and find  
 A third soft air, the atmosphere of mind,  
 Whose sun and rain are pleasure and dejection,  
 Whose wind is will, whose warmth is love, whose  
     being  
 Remote from heavier climes of breath and seeing,  
 To change their weight for power has made election.

The fourth, remoter, half escapes all power.  
 We name the breather, and with mute believing  
 Know him the centre of the garland's weaving,  
 And call him Time, father of earth's first flower.  
 The air he breathes is simple motion going,  
 And motion coming,—tides whose ebb and flowing  
 Only repeat life's gift and death's bereaving.

Yet in us ever is poor Time. We breathe him  
 Outward for life, and inward for our dying,  
 When like a bird come homeward from long flying

He sleeps while white memorial stars shall wreath him.  
Silent, and half in dread, could silence tremble,  
Pass on where symbols praise not nor dissemble,  
Where Fate's old mask comes laughing not nor crying.

For Fate hides underneath these airs, unseen,  
Although she may not change them. The last three  
Hold, first the power that brings again to be  
The past, from out the cave of what has been,  
This is a firmament. The sixth air gives  
Command of life to that which not yet lives ;  
The eternal seventh awaits both thee and me.

## THE PLOUGHMAN.

THE ploughing in the healthful day  
The long good deed was done ;  
All down the furrow gleamed a ray  
Thrown by the yellow sun.

The sun upon his golden arm  
Leaning his golden head,  
Obeying the eternal charm,  
Then to the ploughman said :—

‘ See thy labour gives me voice,—  
Magic, strange with power ;  
Let thy heavy veins rejoice  
Evening is thine hour.

Brother Ploughman, I'm in league  
With our Eternal Lord :  
I will send divine fatigue  
My Angel : thy reward.'

The ploughman frowned and drew his coat  
Over his shoulder hard,  
And saw not through the twilight float  
A singing Angel Bard.

The Angel by his wife alit  
And sang a secret dream.  
Her footsteps back and forward flit,  
Her eyes in wonder beam.

The ploughman looked with wearied glance  
And pushed his creaking door,  
He saw the usual firelight dance,—  
The shadows on the floor,—

The usual food, the usual chair,  
The usual wife with these ;  
All custom'd, all unnoticed there,  
Vainly they seek to please.

Vainly her arms about him thrown,  
Vainly she sought his face  
With love in hers ; but in his own  
The plough-iron held its place.

He would have rather stayed to plough,  
Turning one more long field ;  
But the Sun's Angel held him now  
And forced his heart to yield.

And so he supped and kissed his wife  
And sat beside the door.  
The moon poured down her silver life  
On hill, and field, and moor.



The Angel of Fatigue upraised  
The Ploughman's measuring eyes,  
Learned in furrows' width, but dazed  
Beneath the unfurrowed skies.

Then broke the bands of woven intent  
Bound round his labouring heart.  
The moonlight saw the slender rent,  
And shot one silvery dart.

And with the dart came fluttering there  
One seed of sacred light,  
The Ploughman bowed and breathed a prayer,  
The Angel said, 'Good-night.'

## LOVE'S INFANCY.

YOUNG peasant mother, lately blessed  
I see you smile and turn aside :  
Yes, I remember last year's bride ;  
I know what lips are at the breast  
You proudly show, and proudly hide.

But yet you saw not as you smiled,  
That I within my arms enfold  
A child who, when the world is old,  
Will still be young, a comelier child,—  
And his lips on my heart lay hold.

## SPHINX AND SEKHET.

How first came gods to Egypt-land, and first  
To these gods came intolerable thirst  
To know why they were worshipped of all men,  
No hand has written, lest the flying pen  
Should wing round words forbidden, to release  
From darkness and their immemorial peace  
The sentence of the secret of old woes,  
Begotten when the wind of desert blows,  
And nurtured where the Nile renews her stream :  
Yet now the broken lips in marble dream,  
And now the lids of granite eyes outworn  
Flutter and change, and set themselves in scorn  
To face the paler light of new-born lands ;  
And now the silent, shadowy, patient hands  
Hold the unworshipped symbol of life's cord,  
Where mingled forms, half loved, and half abhorred

Tell of old needs confessed, and magic rites  
 When Lion and Woman met in lawless nights,  
 Each a full god, and each unsatisfied,  
 And each to each their needs of knowledge sighed  
 When both consented to the monster form  
 Of Sphinx and Sekhet that their bosoms warm  
 Might feed at breast the child of double feature,—  
 Wisdom, abhorred by every joy-fed creature.

O melancholy hearts of god-like pain !  
 How often had new sorrows dropped as rain,  
 Before the tangled garden in your breast  
 Threw forth such poison-flower in deep unrest,  
 Or parented a serpent wandering,  
 That crept into the chamber of your king,  
 And pastured on your silent sleeping soul,  
 Filling your dreams with hunger, to unroll  
 Before you the papyrus perilous  
 Whereon you saw in symbols devious  
 The prophecy of double joy you sought  
 When this, your sinister exchange, was wrought ?

Who whispered first the will that lay in both  
 To learn new worlds? Who first, when each was  
     loth,  
 Ventured with timid lips to murmur low  
 The words forbidden? Whence derived the flow,  
 When at the last, as rivers swollen wide  
 The torrent came off urging, side by side  
 There as you lay, each bidding each to use  
 The magic neither now might still refuse?

Didst thou,—thou who art Sekhet, who hast been  
 No more than woman,—thou, no more than queen  
 Whom gods obeyed, no more than she who held  
 Within her limbs the wonder that repelled  
 All fear far off, all sorrow far as night  
 When day returns, and restless hearts grow light,  
 And earth more smoothly rolls, and heaven is fair,—  
 Didst thou the first uplift thy wearied hair,  
 And take the intolerable word and say:—  
 No longer now despair has power to weigh  
 Like iron upon my soul and hold me dumb,—

No longer now in vain the sweet words come  
That, singing in my heart so long ago,  
Made joyous hope within my veins to flow,  
And certain love the colour of my face?  
Now will I stay no longer to gain grace,  
Or to escape destroying, or to save  
This shape of womanhood that waits the grave.  
O stars of magic-loving Egypt, hear:  
I stand beneath you coiling off my fear,  
That round me, like a wetted scarf was coiled,  
And ever colder grew, and ever spoiled  
The free delight that now with change I taste.  
Hasten to fill your houses, while I haste  
To strain the magic woof this dark hour weaves,  
While the soft-footed lion swiftly leaves  
The empty desert and draws near to me,  
To aid this rite of lampless mystery.  
Now shall the spirit of old Egypt dance,  
And joy at heart, and with benignant glance  
Lean over all the broad, unfolded land,  
And soothe it with the hollow of his hand

That passes like a night-wind on the stream,  
 Known to us only who can read his dream.  
 We only wake : the gods have lived in sleep.  
 They strive to keep their power from us, and keep  
 Their wisdom from our hearts, but we have learned  
 The art whereby the stars are nightly burned,  
 And nightly born again with new delight.  
 To weave a spell is but to rob the night  
 Of riches kept for sleep, and out of these  
 To bear off treasure for our wakeful ease,  
 That else should but increase the piled-up wealth  
 Of sleep, too rich already. We by stealth  
 Have stolen the key, and now shall pass the door,  
 And sail the stream, and find the further shore,  
 And pillage and return, and take no harm.  
 The spell begins : we wind our moon-spun charm.

So said you to the old Egyptian shy  
 When night had opened all its wizzardy;  
 So called you change, and danger from the night;  
 So waited you with eyes of clouded sight

Until the lion wandered near, whose breath  
 Should fill your breast, with whose divided death  
 A new-divided life for him and you  
 Should there arise, before the early dew  
 Welcomed the sudden sunrise in the fields.

Beneath the scented winds the summer yields  
 Came, through the warmly sighing air of night,  
 The sudden-footed lion, like a sprite  
 Present without arrival, drawing near  
 Without a journey, born of empty fear.  
 He came and by the woman laid him down  
 There, where she fell in swoon. His bosom brown  
 He leaned upon her side ; his lifted head  
 Raised over hers. She lay in happy dread  
 And drank his deeply-throated breath, and stirred  
 In trembling of new wonder, while she heard  
 A murmur come from him which seemed to tell  
 His wish was hers, and he who knew her well  
 Shared her mad change with joy, and gladly wrought  
 What she long wished and he now thus besought :—







' Can we not change at last the dwelling-place  
 Wherein our soul reserves behind each face  
 The hidden dwelling of its grief malign,  
 Where we are wisdom, though we still repine  
 Weeping for uselessness of Fate, where still  
 We are poor beauty, whose delight shall kill,  
 We are wild hunger, whose desire shall thrive,  
 We are mad love, whose poison makes alive ?  
 Why in our peace is left no joy to taste ?  
 Why spend we all calm years in gloomy haste,  
 Seeking out storm-born hours, if there by chance  
 Some lightning-shaft may reach its slender lance  
 Touching our hearts to force new pleasure through,  
 And open out as dead leaves to the dew,  
 When cold night chills upon a forest burned ?  
 Might we not mend the hunger we have learned  
 Divided in your soul and mine asleep,  
 Each lifting from our shoulders warm and steep  
 The sadly-bending head that mourns above,  
 Changing our dreams, while still the heart of love,  
 Unchanged beat on beneath in deep unrest,

Even as each now triumphs in our breast?  
 You should be Sekhet of the sun's gold fire,  
 And I the cruel Sphinx, toward whom aspire  
 The envies and the loves of all sad men.  
 What need should come to us to turn again?  
 What need to change the change? What hungering  
     need  
 Like to the pain that bids us now be freed,  
 Each from ourself, and join our griefs in one?

So murmuring, the brown-limbed lion begun,  
 So, swooning, heaving, burned the woman's heart,  
 Until her soul, shrunk closely, lay apart,  
 And all the stars in vain beheld the change  
 Pass over him and her in ruin strange.





## THEY SAY.

LIKE May, they say, the World was young,  
 And Time was young, and played at mowing.  
 Fortune played at hoops and flung  
 And chased her wheel with laughter glowing.

But the three old Fates with laughter  
 Leaned and saw the children kissing.  
 Then dark clouds came following after :  
 The old Serpent laughed with hissing.

Jealous old Eternity,  
 Quiet like a lover's languor,  
 Laughed with gentle cruelty,  
 And hushed again in patient anger.

Now Time wanders greying, slaying ;  
 Fortune rides her wheel to grind us :  
 Still they give us, without praying,  
 One kind gift,—the dust to blind us.

THE ART OF THE ANTIQUE.

DESIRE the strong, deride the weak,  
     Love laughing lips while life shall last ;  
     For all, except the End, goes past :  
 This is the Art of the Antique.







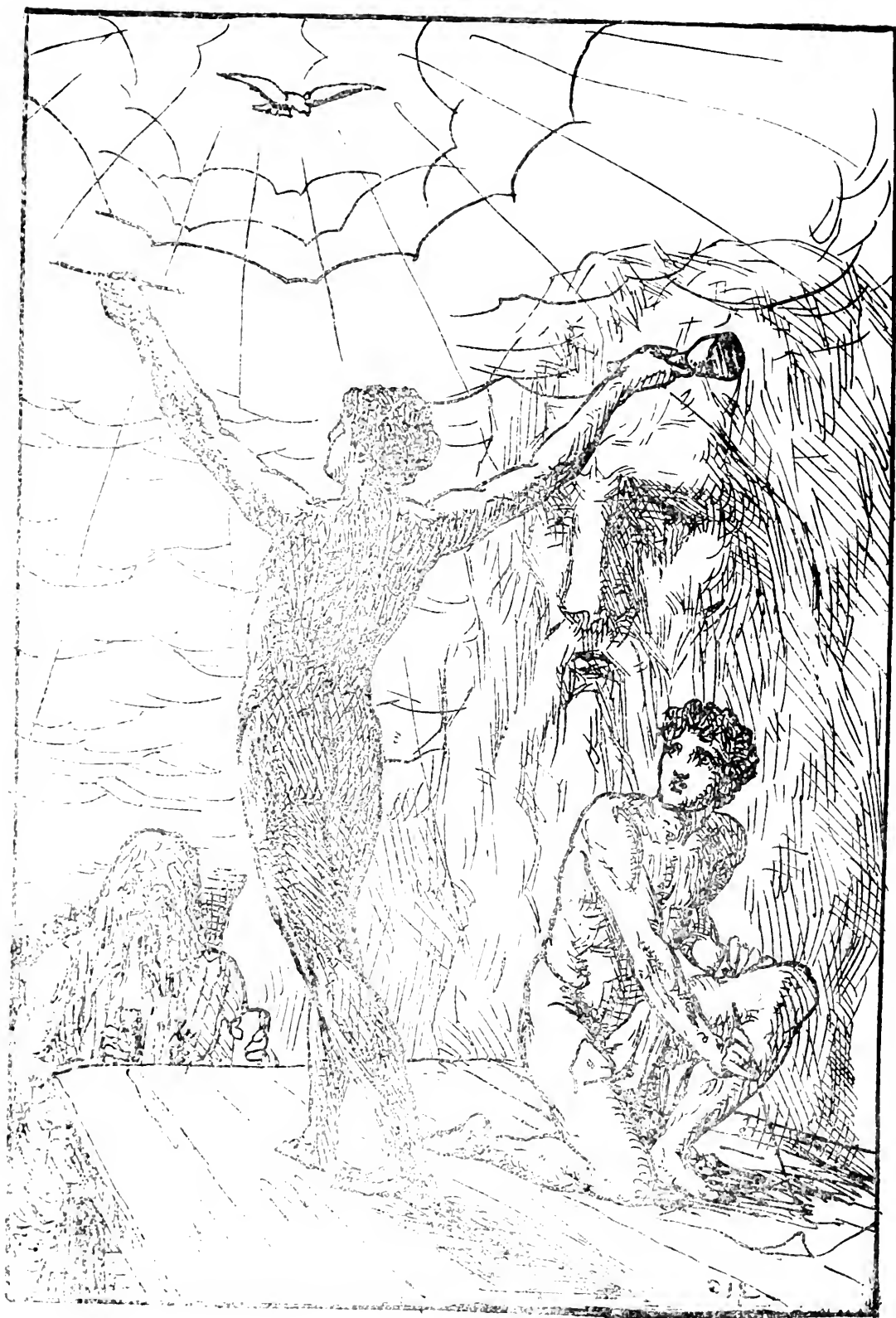
## THE HOPE OF THE ANTIQUE.

O BACCHANALS who danced, and died,—  
 Who danced to Bacchus, years long gone,—  
 You who between the vines espied,  
 A god-like dream, and glorious eyed,  
 Beholding where you danced,—who died  
 So many years long gone,—

No further off than last year's dead,  
 Or last year's laughter shall you be,  
 Brown and free, and garlanded,  
 Springing from the wine-vats red,  
 Still as near as last year's dead,  
 You and your dance shall be.

Ah God of Grapes, red-lipped and living,—  
Dancers, breathless, breathing yet,—  
Autumn sunshine still deceiving,—  
Willingly deceived and giving,  
Life to wine ; we see you living,—  
Breathless, breathing yet.





Whose Image and Superscription? P 155

# WHOSE IMAGE AND SUPERScription ?

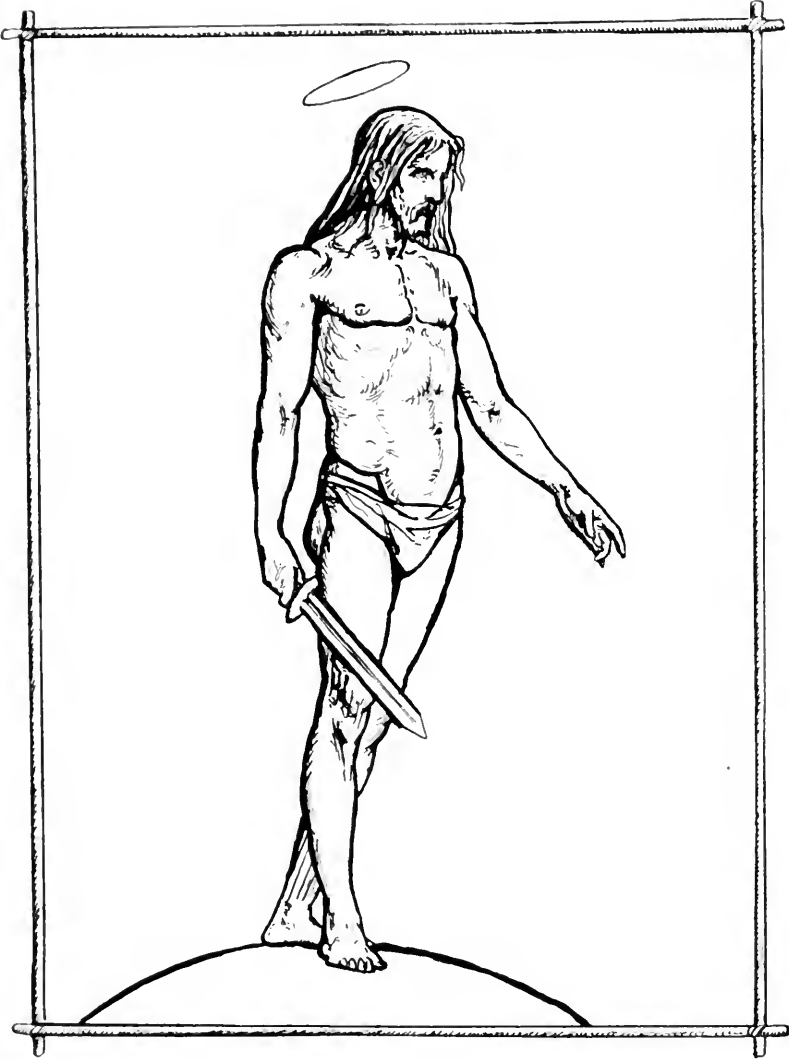
WHO told us Eve was golden-haired  
 Or Adam large of limb ?  
 And Christ ? How looked He as he fared  
 Back to the Cherubim ?  
 The bearded Moses we surmise,  
 Elijah, bare of brow,  
 As though they stood before our eyes  
 As common men do now.

Does great Jehovah wear the mask  
 That first was carved for Jove ?  
 Or did the heathen sculptor ask  
 More than might him behove ?  
 We cannot love a faceless thing,  
 An earless, eyeless God,  
 To whom in vain the Angels sing  
 As larks above the sod.

O God, Creator of our dreams  
    Shared between man and Thee,  
A little make-believing seems  
    No such idolatry ;  
And even if the thing were sin,  
    Yet must we do it still :—  
Thou in Thine Image didst begin  
    The Idol Thou dost kill.







THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

‘ Who chargeth his Angels with folly.’

‘ PEACE on the Earth !’ the Angels’ word,

Heard by the shepherds at His birth :

‘ I come not to send peace on earth,’

Said the Good Shepherd, ‘ but a sword.’

## HIMSELF.

AT Golgotha I stood alone,  
And trembled in the empty night :  
The shadow of a cross was shown  
And Christ thereon who died upright.

The shadow murmured as I went,  
‘ I cannot see thee,—who art thou ?  
Art thou my friend ? or art thou sent  
In hate to rail upon me now.

‘ I have been Christ who linger here,  
A shadow only weak and light,  
And I go mad with tear on tear,  
A ghost of sorrow through the night.

‘I cannot see thee. Art thou one  
Of those I lived to save,—and saved?  
I saved thee; but the sands that run  
Have filled the trace of words engraved.

‘I wrote with finger on the ground  
One pardon, then with blood on wood.  
The priests and elders waited round,  
But none could read of all that stood.

‘None read, and now I linger here,  
Only the ghost of one who died,  
For God forsakes me, and the spear  
Runs ever cold into my side.

‘I have believed in thee when then  
Thou wert not born, nor might I tell  
Thy face among the souls of men  
Unborn, but yet I loved thee well.

‘ Pity me now for this my death ;  
     Love me a little for my love,  
 I loved and died, the story saith,  
     And telleth over and above

‘ Of all my early days of want,  
     And days of work, and then the end,  
 But telleth not how still I haunt  
     My place of death and seek a friend.

‘ My God who lived in me to bless  
     The earth He made has passed away ;  
 And left me here companionless,  
     A weary spectre night and day.

‘ I am the Ghost of Christ the Less,  
     Jesus the man, whose ghost was bound  
 And banished in the wilderness  
     And trodden deep beneath the ground.

‘ I called it “Satan,” this that still  
     Was I, and mine I might not slay,  
 Until the rulers came to kill  
     The God in me, who fled away.

‘ I saw him go, and cried to him,  
     “Eli, thou hast forsaken me !”  
 The nails were burning through each limb :  
     He fled to find felicity.

‘ Ah ! then I knew the foolish wrong  
     That I upon myself had wrought,  
 Then floated off that Spirit strong  
     That once had seemed my own heart’s thought.

‘ He would not stay to see my grave,  
     I could not hold him, and I heard  
 A mocker say I could not save  
     Myself, when I had lost the Word.

‘ Where is the life I might have known  
     If God had never lit on me ?  
 I might have loved one heart alone,  
     A woman white as chastity.

‘ I might have hated devils and fled  
     Whene’er they came. I might have turned  
 From sinners, and I might have led  
     A life where no sin-knowledge burned.

‘ But between voice and voice I chose,  
     Of these two selves and clave to this :—  
 Who left me here where no man knows,  
     And fled to dwell with light in bliss.

‘ Oh you who still have voice and deed,  
     Call Eli ! Eli ! call my soul ;  
 But if he come to thee and plead  
     That thou shouldst let him have the whole



‘ Of all thy will and life, and be,  
     Christ come again by flesh of thine,  
 Thou too shalt know what came to me,  
     Then when I bound my self-hood fine

‘ And called it Satan for his sake,  
     And lived, and saved the world, and died  
 Only for him, my light, to make  
     His joy, who floated from my side,

‘ And left me here with wound of spears,  
     A cast-off ghostly shade to rave,  
 And haunt the place for endless years,  
     Crying, “ Himself he cannot save ! ”’

So spoke the ghost of Joseph’s son  
     Haunting the place where Christ was slain :  
 I pray that e’er this world be done,  
     Christ may relieve his piteous pain.

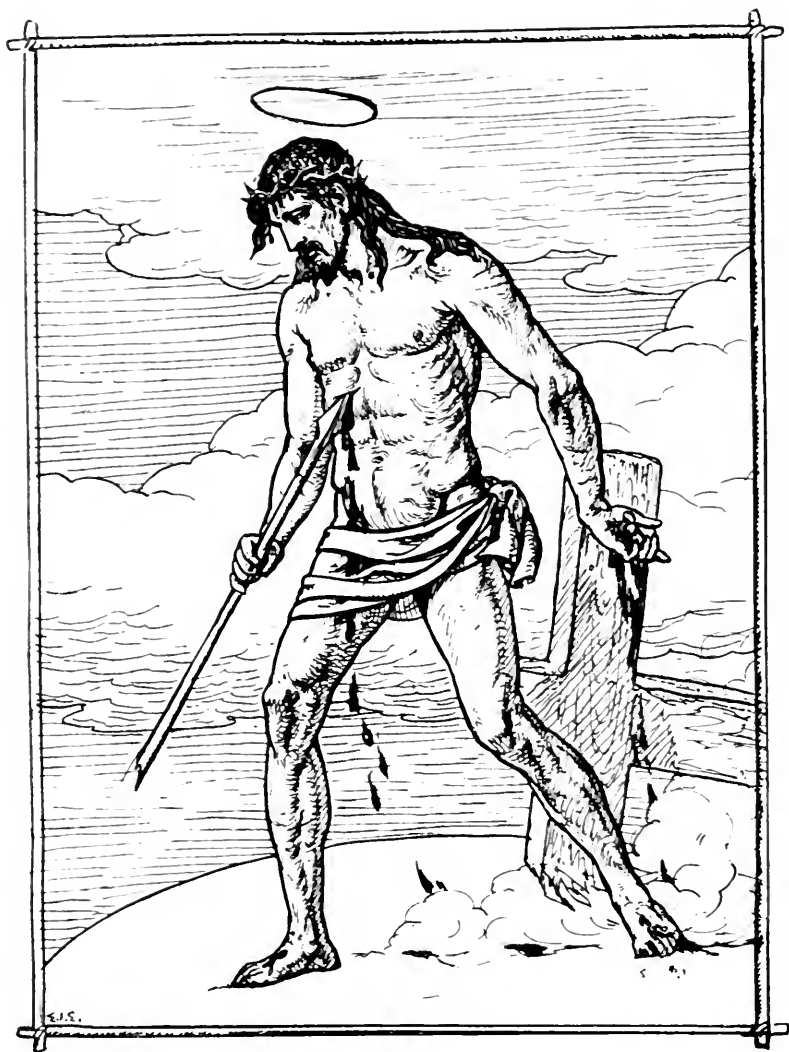
## THE WANDERER.

AH, Christ, it were enough to know  
That brooding on the unborn things  
Thou gatherest up the years that go  
Like a hen's brood beneath her wings.

It were enough to know that those,  
More evil than the years that fall,  
Who heard Thee mocked Thy safe repose  
And would not trust Thee at Thy call.

It ere enough that Thou hast died,  
Because Thyself Thou couldst not save,  
Unless by losing from Thy side  
Thy sons that drove Thee to Thy grave.





Yet more and more we know and see,  
For Golgotha the shade retains  
Of Him who died, the Form of Thee,  
Of Him who bore Thy fleshly pains.

Nor there alone, this Form shall be  
Still seen within us, Thou dost say  
Until there shine on earth and sea  
Light of the unforeboded Day.

O Christ the Wanderer, marked as Cain,  
We know the sign upon Thy brow ;  
We know the trailing cross, the stain ;  
The passing footstep whispers now.

It was Thy hand, we learn at last,  
That nailed Thee in that far-off year ;  
Thy hand as now Thou wanderest past,  
Drives deep within Thy side the spear.

While evil holds the world in grip  
And men revile the eternal powers,  
This vision holds Thee lip to lip  
Close to our love and makes Thee ours.

## ON THIS PICTURE, AND ON THIS.

THIS is the tree where Judas died,  
 And this where Christ was crucified,  
 And there's but little difference in,  
 Save here one did for his own sin  
 That which the Other did for his,  
 For his and ours ; and thus it is  
 That though the Church but little dreamed,  
 Judas, it seems, was twice redeemed  
 If there be power in Sacrifice  
 To get men safe to Paradise.  
 For never priests in all their pride  
 Have proved that God must needs have died  
 To take away such little sin  
 As we, poor mortals, wander in ;  
 Save only, lest it could not be

That any other man than He,  
 The Man Divine could even try  
 In such redeeming mode to die  
 That this His single death should be  
 Beforehand given for thee, and me,  
 Yea, reaching both ways through mankind,  
 And Caiaphas, by God made blind,  
 Who knew not God with head down-bent,  
 Said only 'twas expedient  
 That one for all be slain and die.  
 Therefore if he, and thou, and I  
 (For Scripture cites his words for true)  
 Did on ourselves the sentence do,  
 Then need of Christ had never been.  
 Therefore it is of all men seen  
 That Judas did what God required.  
 Doubt not that he was well inspired,  
 Because the Devil had left him then.  
 He did repent : what more can men ?  
 He had done sin : what less have we ?  
 He paid his death : what more could be ?

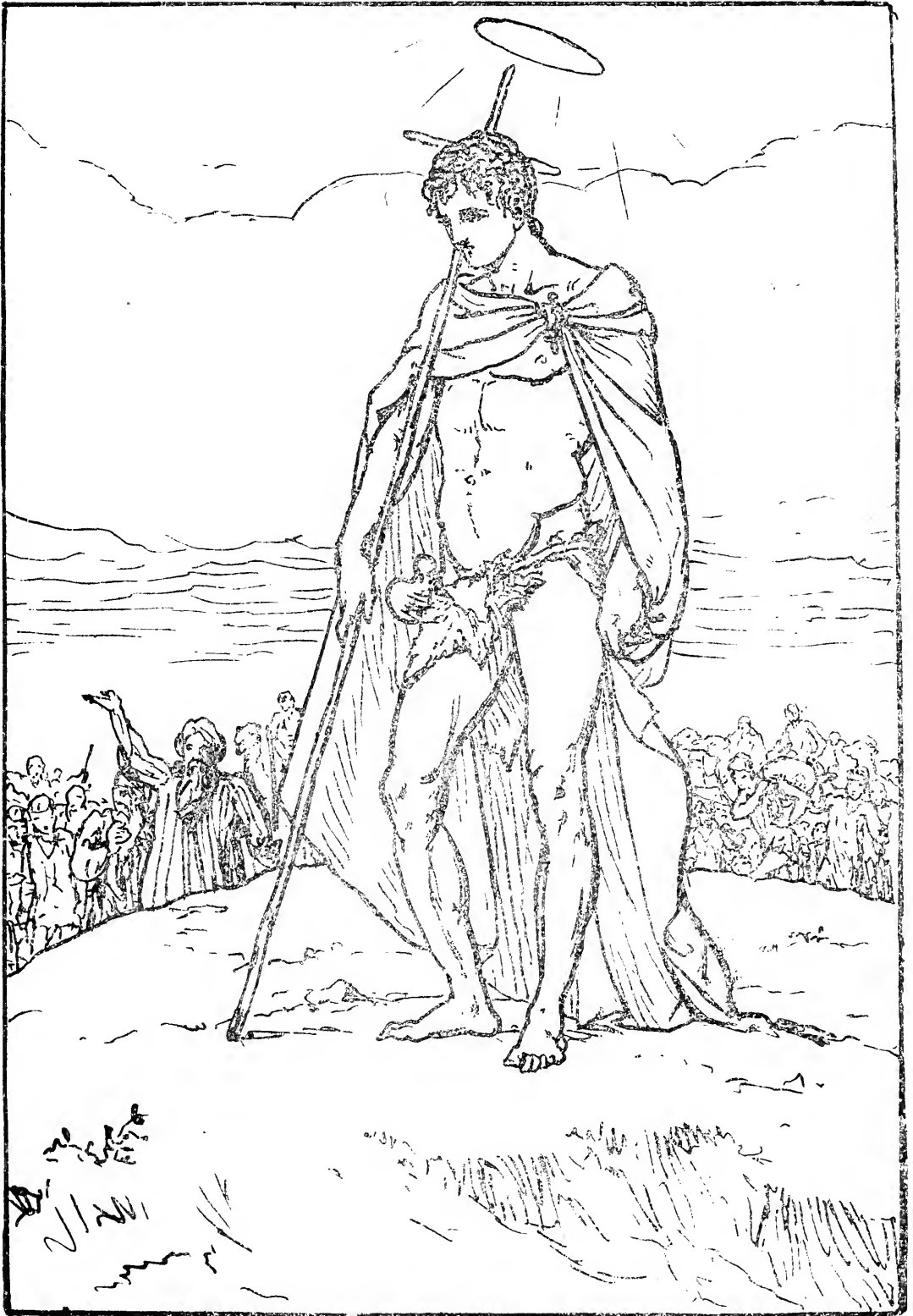


Then e'er ye triumph on the grave  
Of one whom also Christ did save,—  
For he, of all men sick and lost,  
The great Physician needed most,—  
Remember, were his sin not done,  
Salvation had not yet begun,—  
Thine own, nor mine,—and men have raved  
Who doubted were Iscariot saved.  
So think on this, whoe'er ye be  
That see the curst and blessed tree,—  
Beholding this when Judas died,  
And this when Christ was crucified.

## UNWORTHY TO UNLOOSE.

UPON the bank of Jordan stream,  
 From Wilderness, the New Inspired  
 Cried to arouse from mortal dream  
 The people, wondering, drowsed, and tired.  
 They came from labour, gain, and pay,  
 Yet might not he, though Heavenly sent,  
 Force even one to cast away  
 The symbol of his mortal bent,  
 'Repent,' he cried,—no more,—'Repent,'  
 For who may loose a shoe, may slay.

Then came among the crowds the One  
 Who darkened most his inward light,



Unworthy to Unloose p.170



The Son of Him who made the sun,  
 The Son of Him who made the night,—  
 The Word of Parables, who told,—  
 A hidden message few might see,  
 For still the world should night enfold  
 The Serpent still their veil should be,  
 For fear 'lest they be healed,' said he,  
 Physician of the promise old.

Prophet 'Unworthy,' who are we  
 That we our hands may dare to lay  
 Upon the Latchet thou didst see,  
 And left unopened? Who may say  
 But He within the bush that burned,  
 'The ground is holy, Loose thy shoes!'  
 All! All! The lesson dark is learned,  
 Unworthy all,—oh, who may choose?  
 What voice to speak as God refuse?  
 Who turn as Priests and Levites turned?

For Thou in Whom the world believes,  
     The half for hope, the half for dread,  
 Lo, Thou art fallen among thieves,  
     And they have stripped Thee, and are fled.  
 Thy symbols now like shoes unstrung,  
     And scattered lie. Thy robe is free.  
 Thy parables are said and sung,  
     Thy shadow wounded. All may see  
     Thy blood was red as ours, and we,  
 No more outcast and blind are flung.

O Shepherd of the bleeding Crook  
     Whose staff Thou sayest is the sword,  
 Whose scrip has been the darkened Book  
     Whence all Thy sheep this learning stored,  
 To strive with endless rage and power  
     Each against each the wolf to slay;  
 Thou caster of Siloam's tower  
     Upon the wanderers by the way,—  
     No chosen sinners,—Hear us pray  
 A prayer in this unchosen hour.

For like the blind we pray to Thee,  
 And this is all our groping prayer.  
 O teach us to be like, yet be  
 Unlike to Thee,—O bid beware  
 Lest we desire to daze the crowd  
 With curing blindness, brief and near,  
 While yet our blinding speech and proud  
 Goes wandering forth in cloak of fear,—  
 In parable. Thy call we hear,  
 O raise our word and loose the shroud.

Then bid our hundred singers see  
 The world on fire, and press the sod  
 With naked feet, unbound and free ;  
 Bid every bush be red with God ;  
 O make poor symbol wedded Grace  
 The Ring of Old Eternity  
 Put on the bridal hand of Space.  
 His footstool she has been whose face  
 Might with Thy Father's kiss be free.  
 He is no Judas that betrays.

And bid us be Thy second Fall,  
The Cloud, wherein Thou comest again,  
For Men of Sorrows are we all,  
The Cloud is full with blood and rain,  
A listening checks the market's hum:  
The prayer is prayed : we stand aside  
Like patient servants, waiting dumb.  
Yet still the Flesh is Satan's pride,  
Still the last Latchet remains tied,  
And the bare footstep has not come.



## ITALIAN MEMORIES.

## ITALY.

WALLED round by dim and giant legendry  
And clouded high with sunset-coloured gold,  
Powdered as bloom upon the grape-like sea  
And showered like petals on the mountains cold,—  
Even within her borders hard to find,  
One land lies bowered with love in every mind ;

One earth of this same Earth upon whose breast  
We lie in sleep uneasyful, or awake  
Go labouring hard in joy that is not rest,  
One quickly traversed country for whose sake  
Love watches with his lamp toward the past,  
And Death withholds his spear and will not cast.

Through all the harsh and hurrying noise of North,  
 Through love, through sorrow, through the bonds  
 of sloth,  
 Each living man designs to wander forth  
 And seek the central kingdom loved of both  
 Ends of the earth, to see with his own eyes  
 This fair Italian land, these high Italian skies.

For this is Italy, the name of hopes  
 To some, the name of memories to all ;  
 Here southward from the chilly Alpine slopes  
 And northward from the sea, and sea-bird's call,  
 Come all who love brief life to seek for grace  
 Where life's bold lovers in dark years found place.

For here when men were labouring with their strength  
 To make Heaven doubtful and give Hell more fear,  
 When dying wisdom drooped in Greece at length,  
 And Egypt was forgotten, lost, and drear,  
 A race of whom in whispers we declare  
 The Jove-like joy rose, crying, ' Life is fair ! '

Here in their past, they who are now our past  
     Dug Aaron-rods that felt the light and flowered,  
 Here sowed new beauty, though the sand fell fast,  
     Here made new sunshine while the whole sky  
         lowered ;  
 And marble woke up from its dream for them,  
 And bore sweet sculpture on its mountain stem.  
  
 Around cold death they lighted candles warm,  
     Round Justice in her seat hung banners bold ;  
 Their towers had voices and could call to storm  
     With deep-throat bells that never vainly tolled,  
 And high on arching stone, strong doors above  
 Painted the Son of God as fair as love.  
  
 And earthly lovers in red cloaks, and maids  
     In gold embroidered robes that softly fell,  
 With floating hair, or bound in delicate braids  
     Touched lutes and sang, told tales and laughed  
         right well,  
 Took joy and lived, and trod their rich procession ;  
 Envy and Death shrank pale from Love's oppression.

So these spoiled children of their mother Life  
 Gathered with open hands about her knee,  
 Deep in her store of fruit with hungering knife  
 They thrust to reach the seed-core of the tree  
 And plant anew till every branch was bent  
 With full white-blossomed hope, or ripe content.

And Art with divine hunger wandering by  
 Plucked, and grew joyous, loved and bore a child,  
 Laughing aloud as children in their high  
 Pure hour of wineless drunkenness and wild  
 Laugh evermore, and then fall sad apart,  
 Dreaming alone, so laughed the child of Art.

So dreamed, now sorrowing sometime with the pure  
 Who neither pine, nor cruel grow, nor stung  
 To seek self-love in hating all who endure,  
 She saddened nobly her high halls among  
 Where between carved form and form she floated  
 Like a white moth in evening hour unnoted.

All now are dead that knew her ; she remains,

The banquet left, the vessels dry, the song  
Ended and long forgotten, still the stains

Of wine upon the table lingering long  
Show the loud pleasures that no more resound  
Where silent marble sentinels stand bound.

And painted faces from the ceiling clear

Gaze with their all but immemorial eyes  
Upon the dreamless gazers who are here,  
Where once their masters were, and whose surprise  
Makes Italy seem like a sweet rare bird  
That once across the windy trees was heard,

Pouring down song as though the sky bore fruit,

Now in a case shut in to show the plumes  
That oft their many-coloured lights would shoot  
Into the sunbeams, here in dustier tombs  
Than graves of men long dead show sad and frail,  
As poor dead pleasures in our hearts lie pale.

So curiously looked on, heeding not,  
 The silent joys of Italy lie dead,  
 While she herself endures her daily lot  
 Of lost life-knowledge, and though life be fled  
 Where art was life, her shadows firm and fixed  
 Join a strange troupe, fair with corrupting mixed.

This shall be seen, this without pity or veils,  
 Clear in the common daylight of our day,  
 By him who dares to seek her, and not quails  
 Before her face lying where glad she lay  
 Upon her sea-dividing couch, now laid  
 For death, not love, making love's heart afraid.

In death she dreamed she rose, and ruined stones  
 That marked her voyage past must needs renew  
 Because herself renewing. The soft tones  
 Of years long over soon grew rare and few  
 Hateful remasking of unneedful slime  
 Hid the old signs of strength defying time.

And seeing in Rome sweet Nature's unsown flowers  
 Had made a garden where a place of slaughter  
 Once marked most ancient triumph of evil hours,  
 She dragged the bones of her lost erring daughter  
 Out of their grave of roses, and laid bare  
 The frame of an old sin to shameless air.

Come near and see if all this be not so,  
 Come through the glamour of love and stories old,  
 Through the loud sounds that follow as we go  
 Travelling alone with avarice hard and cold  
 Flocking in every shape around our feet,  
 While sweet fair sights float by us faint and fleet.

See in the lofty houses of soul-healing,  
 Where altars once were steps of hope and duty,  
 And prayer had taken hue and form and feeling,  
 And reverence held her simple court of beauty,  
 The gaolers of poor art hang sacred places  
 With heartless silver hearts and faceless faces.

Come to the air. The common men to-day,  
 Are as they were. Do rare ones make default?  
 These once were Italy. Take these away,  
 The high-roofed heaven is a burying-vault  
 Low stooped, till some new giant comes to birth  
 And Atlas-like divides the heavens and earth.

Some few have come. To save his land from death  
 One gathered the torn members of her form,  
 And through the wheel-disjointed limbs his breath  
 Breathed life, and life returned, till sweet and warm  
 She rose again and moved forgetting pain,  
 But still she seeks her first clear soul in vain.

Next came the man who left things coveted,  
 Even the gate of one white sea-board town,  
 Because his word was given away and sped,  
 Nor would he call it back and stain renown  
 For so much more of power to call his own,—  
 Italian he, and filled a new-made throne.



His son from that same palace heard who cried  
 On southern smitten shores in terror vague,  
 And seeing where near, men danced and far, men died,  
 Swift journeying to the city of the plague,  
 Went down for love to play a father's part,  
 And found not death, but his whole people's heart.

What needs a land to seek where such are kings?  
 For surely where the very crown contains  
 Live manhood undestroyed by golden rings  
 The far less tempted crowd more worth retains,  
 If less of praise ; yet still with silent eyes  
 Each painted wall, each carven stone replies ;—

“She has not art. She is not Italy.

Her limbs divided had more life, her own,  
 Than now her mightier form ;—her memory  
 Than all her coming hopes, her antique stone  
 Than these her daily deeds, her past not passed,  
 Than all the wonder by her hope fore-cast.”

She who has been the ruler, strong and wise,  
     She the wild temptress of the second fall,  
 She the sad teacher who with blinded eyes  
     No longer sees the page she turned to all,  
 Once yet again the world's true power shall be,  
 Now the wise few live for the countless free.

AT ASSISI.

A SAINT was here whose feet have come and gone,  
     A painter who remains to glean our love  
 After the harvesting of Heaven is done.  
     One sleeps below, the other shines above.  
 The body of the saint, the painter's soul  
 Dwell here, while loud between the anthems roll.  
  
 The saint sleeps well, he takes his holy rest  
     Beneath three roofs that shade him from the day,  
 Held by his double house, a peaceful guest.  
     Two painted churches and a pavement grey  
 Between him and the changes of the air  
 Spread like a triple shield with tracings rare.

We see him not, nor meet his mortal shell.

Corruption saw him long, and now is dead  
Even as he. If dust remains to tell

It finds the story told. With bending head  
Pale silence broods upon the days that give  
This sleep to him, and this to us who live.

The quiet stars for us their wisdom yield ;

With many a coloured cloud the vaulting bends,  
Heavy above his slumber,—a full field

Where gleam, like quiet stars till our night ends,  
Fair flower-white faces dreaming sacred things,  
Christ's young and old, and angels with their wings.

These are the lamp of sanctuary, these

The beacon warning all. The painter's fire  
Burns over the monk's dust that sleeps at ease.

Giotto is he: St. Francis is the friar.  
Good are their names in life or death, and good  
As love and reverence, our immortal food.

These closely in our hearts 'tis well to lay,  
 Ill is it to forget that such have been.  
 Not yet the living find a loftier day,  
 Nor any holy hours more golden seen  
 With wealth of Heaven or Earth, than theirs that shone  
 Like mountain snow the first light leaps upon.

Well move the many feet from wandering miles  
 That gather and shall gather round their tomb.  
 Still in this highest vault the daylight smiles.  
 Still gaze pale angels in the central gloom.  
 Still bends the quiet rock. They say he wept  
 Full many times, poor saint, before he slept.

His grief sleeps with him, but his spirit shares  
 Our watchfulness. The dark, the dim, the day  
 Each here made living with a thousand prayers  
 That scarcely yet have mounted on their way,  
 Reveal their different lives in equal measure,—  
 Silence and hope, and last, eternal treasure.

O Maker of the Living, did these men  
 So little please Thee? Is this echoing shrine  
 No rainbow of new promise? Or, again,  
 Wilt Thou pour forth Thy fruitfulness divine?  
 We know not. This we know; Thou makest them  
     rare;  
 Then hold we them more hard, and forward fare.

FROM PERÚGIA TO ASSISI.

A LITTLE cup-like valley lies  
     Between two towns in Italy,  
 Filled full of summer to the skies,  
     And through her, seeking for the sea,  
 A softly winding river hies,  
 Yet turning often as she flies  
     Unwillingly away from thee,  
     Sweet valley, that thy summers love, and we.

In April the young oaken leaves,  
     Some grey, and purple velvet some

Foretell July, with gathered sheaves,  
 Or June with merry insect's hum  
 To follow soon, though May bereaves  
 The buds of all soft down, and grieves  
 To spread the shadowy leaflets dumb,  
 Till through their harp the great winds wander-  
 ing come.

First the impatient earth, grown warm,  
 Tenderly parts the covering hands  
 Beneath whose shield from wintry storm  
 Like jewels beneath the ocean sands  
 She hid her seeds all safe from harm  
 Watched by the blind and silent worm.  
 Now one by one they leap from bands  
 Like children dancing through the sunlit lands.

So rise her flowers, some dark, some pale,  
 Swaying above the bending stem,  
 Bright with a little dew-drop frail,  
 The brief, the ever eternal gem.

Never shall golden sun prevail  
To close their eyes or bid them fail,  
And warm wind loves and comforts them,  
Whispering to each at night some new sweet name.

So the wild children of the ground  
Leap from her silent curtained bed.  
Silent clouds on the hills are found  
Seeing them play in their robes of red,  
Or yellow, and pink on the purple mound,  
Or blue, like the high blue air around,  
Till in wide armies ranked they spread,  
Through whom June goes with a commanding tread.

But now the jealous air replies  
In rivalry of earth, and brings  
Soft moths and bright soft butterflies,  
Wilder than flowers, like flowers with wings  
Flown from the gardens of the skies ;  
While lovers laugh to lovers' eyes,  
Murmuring swift mysterious things,  
They whisper as they dance in fairy-rings.

Then wide between the pearly hills

The great rich wine of summer pours :  
Higher and higher the circle fills,

While now no more toward the shores  
Flow the cool slender mountain rills ;  
No more the pink pale morning chills,

Nor midnight rolls her mournful doors

That scarce imprison the sun e'er dawn restores.

And far along the darkening trees

A sound of seething through the glare  
Mounts evermore, as though the seas

And not the land were boiling there,—  
As though some giant upon his knees  
Fanned through a fire the fainting breeze,

In all the caldron vales that flare,

While dry chicale triumph in earth and air.

Autumn : a sudden stillness falls,

The fever of the year is broken.

No more the loud chicala calls

From tree to tree : the wind has spoken.



Now her returning voice appals  
 The lizard sleeping on the walls  
     Drunken with sun, with summer soaken,  
     While the first leaf falls down, a trembling token.

Harvest, and harvest moon and sun  
     Are come and gone ; who knows not well  
 The gold-haired corn, where dance the fun  
     Of gold fire-flies ? Who does not tell  
 How reapers toil till night begun  
 Calls them to song ? These things are done.  
     With these, from out each seething dell,  
     The enchanted summer wine unnoticed fell.

But vintage still shall foam again  
     Though winter comes regretfully,  
 Yet not too soon, while pitying rain  
     Relieves the dark and panting tree,  
 And yellow vines, a golden chain,  
 Span the ploughed fields of sombre stain,  
     And birds and bees take leave of thee,  
     Sweet valley whence thy summer goes, and we.

## CYPRESS.

WHERE the uncomforted thin shadow falls  
 From scantier sunbeams of a chillier sun,—  
 Where round our northern land the sea-gull calls,  
 Where through the grass no emerald lizards run,  
 No vine roof shelters till the heat is done.  
 Nor tall white oxen the dark furrows trace,  
 The cypress is not there ;  
 The solemn cypress in a goodlier place  
 Decks with its gloomiest green a field more fair.

Here is its home, here where the summer's tongue  
 Mute elsewhere sings a hundred-voicing strain,  
 Where bell-like through the day and night are rung  
 Wild shrilling of sweet notes above the grain  
 From unseen throats, till whispering summer rain  
 Breathes suddenly between them and is dumb.  
 The cypress tree is here,  
 The fire-fly's sudden lamp, the may-fly's hum  
 Haunt round its shade and ease it of its fear.

Were now the cypress tree less tall, the sky  
     Would be less near. Were cypress shade less dark  
 Less tragic from the corn the lone fire-fly  
     Would bear unnoticed his strange fate-lit spark ;  
     Less closely would we hide, less panting mark  
 The near note of the sweet pathetic voice,  
     The lonely owlet cries ;  
 Less love the heavy noon-day, less rejoice  
     Ever returning stars to see you leap the skies.

Take love and thanks, take friendship, rhyme and  
     praise,  
     O cypress tree, here on Italian hills,  
 Take from the purple night, and blue of days,  
     From soft gold of the changing hour that chills  
     With sweet and doubtful breath of scent that fills  
 With strange delight the slumber of the bird,  
     Take incense of all hours,  
 And give thy mystic messages half heard,  
     Draw down the stars and watch the midnight  
     flowers.

## SICILY.

WITHIN the opening palm of the early year,  
 Fair with her many flocks, full Sicily  
 Rich in young flowers, and ancient caverns drear,  
 Bound round with echoing bays and laughing sea,  
 With green by grey, and pleasure beside fear,

Shows like another world upon the world,—  
 Winter above, and fire within, the sea  
 Like air around, the air like sea, where hurled  
 The white smoke of her lips floats languidly,  
 Like a white sail, slow swaying, half unfurled.

And all her trees bear fruits, and all their leaves  
 Open in spring to show white flowers within  
 Like throats, and every hill whose curve upheaves  
 Glows, covered, covered bright little flocks that win  
 The breathing heights. Like flocks her autumn sheaves,

Like flocks the flying fleeces of the sea,  
 Bright shine the foamy stones on grasses green,  
 And fleece-white shows the snowy almond-tree  
 Far glimmering on the level pasture green,  
 Or rare on upward slopes of mountain free.

And sunlit villages like silent sheep  
 On cool high hills remotely dream, or roused  
 By their own whiteness out of dewy sleep  
 Seem gathering for the pasture left unbrowsed  
 Where fresher from the dawn her streamlets leap.

Island of many flocks and many hills  
 And many thorns, and many caves and tombs,  
 And spring-pure wines, and wine-bright water  
 rills,  
 And golden gleams of light, and golden glooms,—  
 Filled with old story as an echo fills

Your caverns where a sudden sound has leaped,  
 You sleep, O little land, while for your sake  
 Waking beside you long our hearts are kept ;  
 Wake soon, and pour upon us when you wake,  
 Love for our love that watched you while you slept.

#### MAIDENHAIR.

BEFORE the sun the sunflower,  
 Before the moon the eglantine,  
 White lilies underneath the fir,  
 Blue air about the glowing vine,  
 And twilight for the sweet woodbine.

But down the purple hollow wet  
 Where droops a torrent's rainbow rare,  
 Where shade to shade the stones have met,  
 See there the little Maidenhair,  
 And woo her for her secret there.

## VILLA DORIA GARDEN, ALBANO.

DIANA has been here. The empty wood  
 Remembers yet. The mosses where she stood  
 Still feel her feet, the leaves still turn and bend,  
 As though not yet had fallen forgetful end  
 Upon their startled pleasure, half alarm,  
 There where she touched them with her light cool arm  
 And, passing, caught the dew-drop on her knee,  
 Her outstretched hand from the new-awakened tree  
 Had shaken in the silver hour of dawn.  
 Diana has been here, but she has gone.

The woodman's voice, the toll of hollow doom  
 Rung by the iron falling in the room  
 Of her whose hand was gentle here but now,—  
 The broken sobbing of the fallen bough,—  
 The breath of oxen trailing the slain trees,  
 These are the sounds, the mournful harmonies

That measure the scared singing of the bird,  
 Whose airy voice above their murmur heard  
 Wails for her nest thrown down the trodden wood,  
 As we to see no more where once Diana stood.

A SECRET.

O ITALY that hast been Rome, and Rome  
 That borest rule over the world, now bear  
 The whole world's love, and be the whole world's home.  
 Thou, for whom lovers learn of love to spare  
 Some food from their forever hungered hearts,  
 Give thanks and take and eat with us. Thou cave  
 Where time delights to hide the fairest parts  
 Of things once full and fair he could not save,  
 But by destroying, we now crave to know  
 For which of thy delights we love thee best,  
 Nor till thou tell us will our hearts find rest,  
 But wander on in search. The seasons go,  
 Yet still we know not which thy secret heard



With ears more undeceived than ours, for sweet,  
 Too sweet the murmured sound above the word  
 Covers the sense with music. Oh repeat,  
 Repeat again. We hear as men in dreams,  
 Who know in sleep, yet waking cannot tell  
 What was the wisdom then revealed so well  
 And yet not learned : like this thy secret seems.

Be not displeased that all the watchful hours  
 Of blue pavilioned spring are spent anew  
 In waiting for thy words. Towards the blue  
 Above the city lift the watchman's towers  
 Yet are not high enough,—what tower should be ?  
 There is a starlight the star shall not see,  
 And every summer eve a bird flies through  
 The whisper of the hour and hears it not,  
 Nor have we found the very night,—the day,—  
 The tree, the stone, the sacred trysting-spot  
 Where waits thy secret. Ever on the way  
 And ever glad we go, and ever see

This path will lead us well,—this finds,—and this,—

Here on the stem of this half moving tree /

Were we to lay, as face on face, one kiss,

It surely would reply : the long held speech

Would shape itself in faintly murmuring leaves,

And the wide arms that through the morning reach

And pierce the day, and shake the sloping leaves

Would point where we should go, and find at last

The untrodden path by which thy shadow passed.

Where is the hour not well companioned round

With little movements of the earth and air,

And stillnesses that hold more near than sound

The heart that feels their hands around it there ?

When most are linked the bonds whose unseen ends

Enfold like hands, and cleave like hearts of men,

Still felt long after lost like grasp of friends ?

When at the chill of night the cypress bends

And the stars see it and come down, and when

The little silent leaves of thirsty weeds

Beneath the moon reach for the velvet dew,

And each receives a drop for all his needs  
 Bright as bright eyes of fairies, fleet and few,  
 Or when in hours too full for aimless sleep  
 The waited sunrise and late moon-rays peep  
 Over the shoulders of the hills that stay,  
 Watching the night and guarding long the day.

O patient hills, and ever flowing sky,  
 Hung like a veil made liquid by the air  
 That moves within like water,—curtain fair  
 Bordered with trees below, and grasses high !  
 O Earth, mother of these, still teeming rife  
 With flowers bending in their virgin life,  
 That first feel love and spring and joy to meet,—  
 You forests where the shadowy winds avow  
 The love they tell not to the sun's wide heat,  
 And long white roads that ask but patient feet  
 And promise all the world in change, even now  
 We learn Earth has, as we, a heart to beat.  
 Warm Land, thou art a living power as we,  
 Thou seekest for our love as we seek thee,

Therefore no look of love, no touch so fleet  
 Let fly, let rest on thee, as bird's feet bow  
 The budding branch one instant,—none so swift  
 But he that gives has given away his peace ;  
 The light kiss laid, no power of Time may lift,  
 And Love, who holds all else within his gift,  
 Feeds his few slaves on all, except release.

That thou hast shown us this we love thee best :  
 This is thy secret, and our hearts find rest.

#### NIGHT IN ROME.

No, let not vision in sound of Roman bells  
 Possess our night with shadows woven of sleep,  
 Nor sleep herself, deep well of deepest wells,  
 Draw night in Rome, to drown within her deep ;  
 Come out ! come out ! Here silent sentinels  
 Waked by the moon their wordless vigil keep.

See, in the shadowy moveless air alone,  
 Waiting the wandering of our ghost-like feet,  
 Are ghosts more grim, poor shades of patient stone,  
 Warmed half to life by yesterday's noon heat,  
 Sleepless upon the earth, despairing thrown,  
 Or stern, erect, with hearts too cold to beat.

They stand like life struck through with death's command  
 Where death lies pierced with the eternal peace,—  
 Brothers by brothers newly dead they stand  
 With lips grown hard, more pale than dewiest fleece,  
 And ask a movement from the marble hand  
 To say,—Is death imprisonment or release.

And thou, O Ruin of a hundred eyes  
 All hollow in the unsheltered skull upright,—  
 Thou famine after banquet! Our surmise  
 Puts life within those caves, where laughing sight  
 Once leapt, then lingered, but where now the cries  
 Of birds insult by day, and breath of flowers by night.

More than a skull whom life with long forsaking  
 Leaves naked to the crumbling of cold air :  
 More than wide hollow eyes for ever waking,  
 For ever blind ; more than a garden rare,  
 Thou art a billow of sea for ever breaking  
 Whose thunder and heavy flood our terror spare.

Safe in thy shadow, magic, moveless wave  
 Long balanced like a falcon over bending  
 We tread, like dreams that peer into a grave,  
 While danger sleeps and fear needs no defending,—  
 Or Israel faithful when her leader's stave  
 Had power on wind and sea, their war suspending.

Better than labouring dreams in sleep's hard leisure  
 To hide within thy cavern depth of shade,  
 And see far off the moon still freely measure  
 Her arch across the heavens that never fade,  
 Consoling, like remembered loves or pleasure  
 Tired hearts of life, or death, or time afraid.

Therefore within the circle of thy caves,  
Thou honeycomb deserted by the bees,—  
Thou ice-bound sea with waves frozen over waves,—  
Thou eyeless casket of lost jewelries,—  
Thou sad funereal pile of emptied graves,—  
Near whom both life and death are ill at ease.

Servant of neither, watcher over each,  
This night while neither guards without the door,  
I steal from sleep, and climb with hands that reach,  
And on thy knees for sacrifice I pour,  
Between two silences, one whispered speech  
Of rhymes that pass where silence shall endure.









Ellis, Edwin John.

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